

S E R M O N S

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

BY

HUGH LATIMER,

SOMETIME BISHOP OF WORCESTER;

MANY OF WHICH

WERE PREACHED BEFORE THE COURT.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

H I S L I F E.

“The Words of the Wise are as Goads.”

SOLOMON.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. PITCHER, No. 44, *Barbican*.

M.DCC.LXXXVIII.



S E R M O N XVI.

Being the first of seven preached upon

T H E L O R D ' s P R A Y E R .

Before the right honourable Lady Katharine, Dutcheſs of Suffolk, in the Year 1552.

M A T T H E W vi. 9.

Our Father which art in heaven.

I HAVE of late ſpoken many things of prayer, and rather of prayer than of any other thing: for I think there is nothing more neceſſary to be ſpoken of, nor more abuſed than prayer was by the craft and ſubtilty of the devil; for many things were taken for prayer when they were nothing leſs.

Therefore, now at this preſent time I intend as by the way of a lecture, at the requeſt of my moſt gracious Lady, to expound unto you, her houſehold ſervants, and others that be willing to hear, the right underſtanding and meaning of this moſt perfect prayer which our Saviour himſelf taught us, at the requeſt of his diſciples, which prayer we call *Pater-noſter*. This prayer of our Lord may be called a prayer above all prayers, the principal and moſt perfect prayer, which prayer ought to be regarded above all others, conſidering that our Saviour himſelf is the author of it; he was the maker of this prayer, being very God and man. He taught us this prayer, who is a moſt perfect ſchoolmaſter, and commanded us to ſay it; which

which prayer containeth great and wonderful things, if a learned man had the handling of it. But as for me, such things as I have conceived by the reading of learned mens' books, so far forth as God will give me his grace and spirit, I will shew unto you touching the true meaning of it, and what is to be understood by every word contained in this prayer; for there is no idle word in it. For it must needs be perfect, good, and of great importance, being our Saviour's teaching, which is the wisdom of God itself. There be many other Psalms and prayers in scripture very good and godly, and it is good to know them. But it is with this prayer, the Lord's prayer, I say, like as with the law of love. All the laws of Moses, as concerning what is to be done to please God, how to walk before him uprightly and godly; all such laws are contained in the law of love. 'Thou shalt love the Lord
' thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with
' all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself:' even so it is with this prayer. For like as the law of love is the sum and abridgement of the other laws, so this prayer is the sum and abridgement of all other prayers; yea, whatsoever mankind hath need of to soul and body, that same is contained in this prayer.

This prayer hath two parts; first, the preface; secondly, the prayer itself. The preface is this; when ye pray, say,
' Our Father which art in heaven;' as who should say, you christian people, you that bear the name of christians, you may pray so.

Before I go any farther, I must put you in remembrance to consider how much we be bound to our Saviour Christ, that he would vouchsafe to teach us to pray; and in this prayer to signify unto us the good-will which our heavenly Father beareth towards us: Now to the matter:

' Our Father.' These words pertain not to the petitions, they be but a seeking favour at God's hand; yet if we will weigh and consider them, they admonish us of many things and strengthen our faith excellently well. For this word Father signifieth, that we be Christ's brothers;

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thers, and that God is our Father. He is the eldest Son; he is the Son of God by nature, we be his sons by adoption through his goodness; therefore he biddeth us to call him our Father, which is to be had in fresh memory, and great reputation. For here we are admonished how that we be 'reconciled unto God; we, which before-time were his enemies, are made now the children of God, and inheritors of everlasting life.'* This we be admonished of by this word Father. So that it is a word of much importance; for it confirmeth our faith, when we call him Father. Therefore our Saviour, when he teacheth us to call God Father, teacheth to understand the fatherly affection which God beareth towards us; which thing maketh us bold to call upon him, knowing that he beareth a good-will towards us, and that he will surely hear our prayers.

When we be in trouble, we doubt of a stranger whether he will help us or not: but our Saviour commanding us to call God Father, teacheth us to be assured of the love and good-will of God towards us: so by this word 'Father,' we learn to establish and comfort our faith, knowing most assuredly that he will be good unto us. For Christ was a perfect schoolmaster, he lacked no wisdom; he knew his Father's will and pleasure; he teacheth us, yea and most certainly assureth us, that God will be no cruel judge, but a loving Father. Seeing now we find such comfort by this one word, we ought to consider the whole prayer with great diligence and earnest mind. For there is no word nor letter contained in this prayer, but it is of great importance, and therefore it is necessary for us to know and understand it thoroughly; and then to speak it considerately and with great devotion; else it is of no purpose to speak the words without understanding, it is but lip labour and vain babbling, and so unworthy to be called prayer; as it was in times past used in England.

Therefore when you say this prayer, you must well consider what you say; for it is better once said delibe-

* Col. i. 21.

ately, with understanding, than a thousand times without understanding; which is in very deed but vain babbling; and so is more a displeasure than pleasure unto God. For the matter lieth not in much saying, but in well saying. So, if it be said to the honour of God, then it hath its effect, and we shall have our petitions: for God is true in his promises; and our Saviour knowing him to be well affected towards us, commandeth us therefore to call him Father.

Here you must understand, that like as our Saviour was most earnest and fervent in teaching us how to pray and call upon God for aid and help, and for things necessary both to our souls and bodies: so the devil, that old serpent, with no less diligence endeavoureth himself to let and stop our prayers; so that we shall not call upon God. And among other his lets, he hath one especially, wherewith he thinketh to keep us from prayer, which is the remembrance of our sins. When he perceiveth us to be disposed to pray; he cometh with his crafty and subtil insinuations, saying, What, wilt thou pray unto God for aid and help? Knowest thou not that thou art a wicked finner, and a transgressor of the law of God? Look rather to be damned, and judged for thy evil doings, than to receive any benefit at his hands. Wilt thou call him Father, which is so holy a God, and thou art so wicked, and miserable a finner?

This the devil will say, and trouble our minds, to stop us from our prayer; in this temptation we must seek for some remedy and comfort; for the devil doth put us in remembrance of our sins to that end, to keep us from prayer and invocation of God. The remedy for this temptation is to call our Saviour to remembrance, who hath taught us to say this prayer: he knew his Father's pleasure, he knew what he did. When he commanded us to call God our Father, he knew we should find fatherly affections in God towards us. Call this, I say, to remembrance, and again remember that our Saviour hath cleansed, through his passion, all our sins, and taken away all our wickedness. So that as many as believe in him shall

shall be the children of God. In such wise let us strive and fight against the temptations of the devil, which would not have us to call upon God, because we be finners. Catch thou hold of our Saviour, believe in him, be assured in thy heart, that he with his sufferings took away all thy sins. Consider again, that our Saviour calleth us to prayer, and commandeth us to pray : our sins let us, and withdraw us from prayer ; but our Saviour maketh them nothing : when we believe in him, it is like as if we had no sins. For he changeth with us, he taketh our sins and wickedness from us, and giveth unto us his holiness, righteousness, justice, fulfilling of the law ; and so, consequently, everlasting life : so that we be like as if we had done no sin at all ; for his righteousness standeth us in so good stead, as though we of ourselves had fulfilled the law to the uttermost.

Therefore our sins cannot hinder us, nor withdraw us from prayer ; for they be gone, they are no sins, they cannot be hurtful unto us. Christ dying for us, as all the scripture, both of the New and Old Testament, witnesseth ; ' He hath taken away our sorrows.' Like as when I owe unto a man an hundred pounds ; the day is expired, he will have his money ; I have it not, and for lack of it, I am laid in prison. In such distress cometh a good friend, and saith, Sir, be of good cheer, I will pay thy debts ; and forthwith payeth the whole sum, and setteth me at liberty. Such a friend is our Saviour ; he hath paid our debts, and set us at liberty ; else we should have been damned world without end, and in everlasting prison and darkness. Therefore though our sins condemn us, yet when we alledge Christ and believe in him, our sins shall not hurt us. For St. John saith, if we have sinned, ' We have an advocate with God the Father, ' Jesus Christ the righteous.'* Mark what he saith, ' We have an advocate,' not advocates, he speaketh singularly, not plurally.

We have one advocate, not many ; neither faints,

* I. John ii. 1.

nor any body else, but only him, and none other, neither by the way of mediation, nor by the way of redemption. He only is sufficient, for he only is all the doer, let him have all the whole praise. Let us not withdraw from his majesty, and give it to creatures, for he only satisfieth for the sins of the whole world. So that all that believe in Christ be clean from all the filthiness of their sins. For St. John Baptist saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.*' Doth the devil call thee from prayer? Christ calleth thee unto it again; for so it is written. 'To that end the Son of God appeared, to destroy the works of the devil.†' It is a wonderful saying that St. John hath; 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' The devil saith unto me, thou art a sinner: yea, saith St. John, but the Lamb of God hath taken away thy sins. Also, 'We therefore having a great high priest, which hath passed through the heavens, even Jesus the Son of God, let us with boldness go unto the seat of his grace, that we may obtain mercy.‡' O it is a comfortable thing that we have an access unto God. Isaiah saith, 'The pains of our punishment was laid upon him, and with his stripes are we healed.§' Farther, in the New Testament we read, 'Unto the same bear all the prophets witness, that, all they do receive forgiveness of sins by his name, which believe on him.¶'

Now ye see how ye be remedied from your sins; you hear how you shall withstand the devil, when he would withdraw you from prayer. Let us therefore not give over prayer, but stick unto it; let us rather believe Christ our Saviour than the devil, which was a liar from the beginning. You know how you may prevent him, how ye may put him off, and avoid his temptations.

There is one other addition before we come to the petitions, which doth much confirm our faith, and increase

* John i. 29.

† I. John iii. 8.

‡ Heb. iv. 16.

§ Isa. liii. 4, 5.

¶ Acts x. 43.

the same; those words, 'which art in heaven:' these words put a diversity between the heavenly Father, and our temporal fathers. There be some temporal fathers which would fain help their children, but they cannot, they be not able to help them. Again, there be some fathers which are rich, and might help their children, but they be so unnatural they will not help them. But our heavenly Father, in that we call him Father, we believe that he will help, that he beareth a fatherly love towards us.

'In Heaven:' here we learn that he is able to help us, to give us all good things necessary to soul and body; and is mighty to defend us from all ill and peril. So it appeareth that he is a Father which will help us, and that he being celestial, he is able to help us. Therefore we may have a boldness and confidence, that he may help us, and that he will help us, where and whensoever we call. He saith, 'I fill heaven and earth.'* And again, 'Heaven is my seat, and the earth is my footstool.'† Where we see, that he is a mighty God; that he is in heaven and earth, with his power and might. In heaven he is evidently, where face to face he sheweth himself unto his angels and saints. In earth he is not so apparently, but darkly, and obscurely he exhibiteth himself unto us; for our corrupt and evil flesh could not bear his Majesty. Yet he filleth the earth; that is to say, he ruleth and governeth the same, ordering all things according unto his will and pleasure. Therefore we must learn to persuade ourselves, and undoubtedly to believe that he is able to help us: and that he beareth so good and fatherly a will towards us that he will not forget us. Therefore the royal prophet David saith, 'The Lord looked down from heaven.'‡ As far as the earth is from heaven, yet God looked down, he seeth all things, he is in every corner. He saith, the Lord hath looked down, not the saints: no, he saith not so. For the saints have not so sharp eyes to see down from heaven;

* Jer. xxiii. 24.

† H. lxxvi. 1.

‡ Ps. cii. 19.

they cannot see so far, nor have not so long ears to hear. And therefore our petition and prayer should be unto him, which will hear and can hear. For it is the Lord that looked down.

Therefore ponder and consider these words well, for they fortify our faith. We call him 'Father,' to put ourselves in remembrance of his good-will towards us, 'Heavenly,' we call him, signifying his might and power, that he may help and do all things according to his will and pleasure. So it appeareth most manifestly, that there lacked neither good-will, nor power in him.

Again, this word 'Father,' is not only apt and convenient for us to strengthen our faith withal, but also it inclineth God the sooner to hear us when we call him by that name, Father. Certain it is, and proved by holy scripture, that God hath a fatherly affection towards us, far passing the love of earthly parents to their children. Yea, as far as heaven and earth are asunder, so far his love toward mankind exceedeth the love of natural parents to their children; which love is set out by the mouth of his holy prophet Isaiah, where he saith, 'Can a woman forget the child of her womb, and the son whom she had born? And though she do forget him, yet will not I forget thee.*' Here are shewed the affections and unspeakable love, which God beareth towards us.

Here I have occasion to tell you a story which happened at Cambridge. Master Bilney, or rather Saint Bilney, that suffered death for God's word sake, the same Bilney was the instrument whereby God called me to knowledge, for I may thank him, next to God, for that knowledge that I have in the word of God. For I was as obstinate a papist as any was in England, infomuch that when I should be made bachelor of divinity, my whole Oration went against Philip Melancthon, and against his opinions. Bilney heard me at that time, and perceived that I was zealous without knowledge; he

* Is. xlix. 15.

came to me afterward in my study, and desired me for God's sake to hear his confession: I did so. And to say the very truth, by his confession I learned more than before in many years. So from that time forward I began to relish the word of God, and forsook the school-doctors and such fooleries.

Now after I had been acquainted with him, I went with him to visit the prisoners in the Tower at Cambridge, for he was ever visiting prisoners and sick folk. So we went together, and exhorted them, as well as we were able, to patience, and to acknowledge their faults. Among other prisoners, there was a woman which was accused that she had killed her child, which act she plainly and stedfastly denied, and could not be brought to confess the act; which denying gave us occasion to search the matter, and so we did. The matter was thus:

A child of hers had been sick by the space of a year, and so decayed as it were in a consumption. At length it died in harvest time. She went to her neighbours and other friends to desire their help, to prepare the child for burial; but there was nobody at home, every man was in the field. The woman, in an heaviness and trouble of spirit, went, and being herself alone, prepared the child for burial. Her husband coming home, not having great love towards her, accused her of the murder, and so she was taken and brought to Cambridge. But as far as I could learn, through earnest inquiry, I thought in my conscience the woman was not guilty, all the circumstances well considered.

Immediately after this, I was called to preach before the King, which was my first sermon before his Majesty, and it was at Windfor; where his Majesty after the sermon was done, did most familiarly talk with me in a gallery. Now when I saw my time, I kneeled down before his Majesty, opening the whole matter, and afterwards most humbly desired his Majesty to pardon that woman. For I thought in my conscience she was not guilty; or else I would not for all the world sue for a murderer. The King
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most graciously heard my humble request, insomuch that I had a pardon ready for her at my returning homeward. In the mean season, that woman was delivered of a child in the Tower of Cambridge, whose godfather I was; but all that time I hid my pardon, and told her nothing of it, only exhorting her to confess the truth. So we travailed with this woman till we brought her to a good opinion; and at length when she expected to suffer, shewed her the King's pardon, and let her go.—

This tale I told you on this occasion, that though some women be very unnatural, and forget their children, yet when we hear any body so report, we should not be too hasty in believing the tale, but rather suspend our judgments till we know the truth.

And again, we shall mark hereby the great love and kindness of God, our loving Father, who sheweth himself so loving unto us, that, notwithstanding women forget sometimes their own natural children, yet he will not forget us; he will hear us when we call upon him; as he saith by the Evangelist Matthew, 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,' &c.* Then he bringeth in this similitude, saying, 'Is there any man amongst you, which, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? If ye then, being evil, can give your children good gifts,† &c. In these words, where he saith, 'which be evil,' he giveth us our proper name, he painteth us out. And here we learn to acknowledge ourselves to be wicked, and to know him to be the well-spring and fountain of all goodness, and that all good things come of him. Therefore let every man think lowly of himself, humble himself and call upon God, who is ready to give us, not only bread and drink, or other necessities, but the Holy Ghost. To whom will he give the Holy Ghost? To lords and ladies, to gentlemen or gentlewomen? No, not so; he is not ruled by affections; he hath not respect unto personages; but 'unto those who call upon him,'

* Matt. vii. 7-9.

† Ps. cxlv. 18.

being rich or poor, lords or knights, beggars or kings; he is ready to give unto them when they come to him: and this is a great comfort unto those which be poor and miserable in this world, for they may be assured of the help of God, yea, and as boldly go unto him, and desire his help, as the greatest King on earth. But we must ask, we must inquire for it; he would have us to be importunate, to be earnest and diligent in desiring, then we shall receive, when we come with a good faith and confidence. To whom shall we call? Not unto the saints. 'Those that call upon me,' saith he, 'shall be heard.' Therefore we ought to come unto him only, and not unto the saints.

But one word is left, which we must needs consider; it is 'our,' he saith not *my*, but *our*; wherefore, saith he, 'our?' This word 'our' teacheth us to consider that the Father of heaven is a common Father, as well my neighbour's Father as mine; as well the poor man's Father as the rich; so that he is not a peculiar Father, but a Father to the whole church and congregation, to all the faithful, be they never so poor, so vile and despised; yet he is their Father as well as mine: and therefore I should not despise them, but consider that God is their Father as well as mine.

Here may we perceive what communion is between us; so that when I pray, I pray not for myself alone, but for all the rest: again, when they pray, they pray not for themselves only, but for me; for Christ hath so framed this prayer, that I must needs include my neighbour in it. Therefore all those which pray this prayer, they pray as well for me as for themselves; which is a great comfort to every faithful heart, when he considereth that all the church prayeth for him. For amongst such a great number there be some which be good, and whose prayer God will hear. And it appeareth by Abraham's prayer, which prayer was so efficacious, that God would have pardoned Sodom and Gomorrah, if he might have found but ten good persons therein. Likewise St. Paul in shipwreck preserved his company by his prayer. So that

it is a great comfort unto us to know that all good and faithful persons pray for us.

And here it is to be noted, that prayer hath one property before all other good works; for with my alms I help but one or two at once, but with my faithful prayer I help all. I desire God to comfort all men living, but especially 'those which be of the household of faith:' yet we ought to pray with all our hearts for others which believe not, that God will turn their hearts and renew them with his spirit; yea, our prayers reach so far, that even our chief enemy ought not to be omitted.

Here we see what an excellent thing prayer is; when it proceedeth from a faithful heart, it doth far surpass all the good works that men can do.

Now to make an end; we are admonished here of charity, and taught, that God is not only a Father, but a common Father unto all the faithful, be they never so poor and miserable in this world, yet he is their Father. Where we may learn humility and lowliness, especially great and rich men should learn here not to be lofty or to despise the poor. For when ye despise the poor miserable man, whom despise you? Ye despise him which calleth God his Father as well as you; and, peradventure, may be more acceptable, and more regarded in his sight than you be. Those proud persons may learn here to leave their stubbornness and loftiness. But there be a great many which little regard this; they think themselves better than other men be, and so despise and contemn the poor, insomuch that they will not hear poor mens' causes, nor defend them from the wrong and oppression of the rich and mighty. Such proud men despise the Lord's prayer; they should be as careful for their brethren, as for themselves. And such humility, such love and carefulness towards our neighbours, we learn by this word 'our.' Therefore I desire you, on God's behalf, let us cast away all disdainfulness, all pride, yea, and all babbling. Let us pray this prayer with understanding and great deliberation, not following the trade of monkery, which was without devotion or understanding.

ing. There be but few which can say, from the bottom of their hearts, 'Our Father.' Neither the Turks, nor the Jews, nor yet any impenitent sinners, can call God their Father. Therefore it is but vain babbling whatsoever they pray; God heareth them not, he will not receive their prayers. The promise of hearing is made unto them only which be faithful and believe in God, which endeavour themselves to live according to his commandments: for the scripture saith, 'The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.'*

But who are those righteous? Every penitent sinner that is sorry from the bottom of his heart for his wickedness, and believeth that God will forgive him his sins, for his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's sake. In such sort Peter and Paul were just, because they did repent, and believe in Christ, and endeavoured themselves to live according to God's laws. Therefore, like as they were made just before God, so may we too; for we have even the self-same promise. Let us therefore follow their example, let us forsake all sins and wickedness, then God will hear our prayers. For the scripture saith, 'The Lord filleth the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and help them.'† In another place he saith, 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what you will, and it shall be done for you.'‡ So we see, that the promises appertain only to the faithful, to those which endeavour themselves to live according to God's will and pleasure, which can be content to leave off wickedness, and follow godliness; those God will hear at all times, whensoever they call upon him.

Remember now what I have said; remember what is meant by this word 'Our;' namely, that it admonisheth us of love and charity, it teacheth us to beware of stubbornness and pride; considering, that God loveth as well the beggar as the rich man, for he regardeth not persons. Again, what is to be understood by this word 'Father;'

* Ps. xxxiv. 15.

† Ps. cxlv. 19.

‡ John xv. 7.

namely, that he beareth a good-will towards us, that he is ready and willing to help us: 'Heavenly,' that admonisheth us of his omnipotency and ability, that he is ruler over all things. These things, I say, remember and follow, then we shall receive all things necessary for this life, and finally, everlasting joy and felicity. *Amen.*

Let us pray, '*Our Father,*' &c.

SERMON

S E R M O N X V I I .

Being the second of those preached upon

T H E L O R D ' s P R A Y E R .

M A T T H E W v i . 9 .

Hallowed be thy name.

TH E S E few words contain the first petition of the Lord's prayer ; the other words which go before this be no part of the petition, but rather an introduction thereto, that the petitions might be the sooner and with more favour heard. For our Saviour being a perfect school-master, and a learned and an expert orator, teacheth us how we should begin our prayer that we might be speedily heard and accepted at God's hand.

This we have considered, and proceed now to the first petition : ' Hallowed be thy name.' Thy name, ' Father,' be hallowed, sanctified, and magnified. What is this ? What meant our Saviour when he commanded us that we shall desire that God's name be hallowed ? There is a great number of people which speak these words with their mouth, but not with their heart, as they ought to do.

What is it for God's name to be hallowed ? We desire that the name of God may be revealed, manifested, and believed, throughout the world. What is God's name ? Marry, all that is spoken of him in holy scripture, that is his name. He is called, ' Gracious, Merciful, Righteous, True, Almighty, Long-suffering, Patient, a Judge, a Saviour,' &c. These, and such like, are the names of God. Now when I make my petition unto him,

him, saying, 'Hallowed be thy name;' I desire that his name may be revealed, that we may know what scripture speaks of him, and so believe the same, and live after it. I do not desire that his name be hallowed of himself, for it needeth not; he is holy already: but I desire that he will give us his spirit, that we may honour him in all our doings and conversations; so that it may appear by our deeds that God is even such a one indeed as the scripture doth report him. We are tried many times whether his name be hallowed amongst us or no; he sendeth us troubles and adversities to prove us, whether we will hallow his name or no; but he findeth us clean contrary: for some of us, when we be in trouble, do run hither and thither to get remedy; but they hallow not the name of God.

I heard of late that there be some wicked persons, despisers of God and his benefits, which say, it is no matter whatsoever we do; we be baptized, and we cannot be damned: for all those that be baptized, and be called Christians, shall be saved. This is a false and wicked opinion; and, I assure you, that such as bear the name of Christians, and be baptized, but follow not God's commandments; that such men, I say, be worse than Turks and Heathens; for the Turks and Heathens have made no promise unto Christ to serve him: but they break their promise made before God and the whole congregation: and therefore such Christians be most wicked, perjured persons; and not only be they perjured, but they go about to make God a liar, so much as lieth in them.

There be some again, which when they be in trouble, they call upon God; but he cometh not presently, designing to prove their patience; they perceiving he cometh not at the first call, give over by and by, they will no more call upon him. Do they believe now think ye? Do they sanctify God's holy name? God promiseth in his holy word, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee; and thou shalt praise me.'* Like-

* Psalm l. 15.

St. Paul saith; 'God is faithful; which will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.'* Now when we give over prayer, being in trouble, do we sanctify the name of God? No, no; we slander and blaspheme his holy name; we make him a liar as much as we can in us. For he saith, 'I will deliver thee, I will help thee.' We will call no more; for we say, he will not help. So we make him and his word a liar. Therefore God said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the sight of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.'† Where appeareth what it is to hallow God's name, that is, to believe his words, to shew ourselves that he is true in his sayings and sayings. He saith farther, 'Fear them not, neither be afraid of them, but sanctify the Lord of Hosts.'‡

Here you see what it is to sanctify his name; that is, to believe that all things be true that be spoken of him; that is, to believe that our enemies are not able to go farther than it pleaseth God. And so did the apostles when they suffered for God's sake; they believed that God would do with them according to his word and promise. And so they sanctified God; that is, they declared by their acts and deeds, that God is a true and faithful God. This did the martyrs of God; this did the three young men which would not worship the idol set up by the King, and therefore were cast into the burning oven, to which pain they were willing to go. 'We know,' said they, 'that God is able to help and defend us, when it pleaseth him. §

So must we likewise offer ourselves unto the cross, content to suffer whatsoever he shall lay upon us. We may call upon him, and desire his help, but we may not appoint unto him the manner and way how he shall help, and by what means; neither may we appoint unto him

* I. Cor. x. 13.

† II. viii. 13.

‡ Numb. xx, 12.

§ Dan. iii. 17.

any time, but only sanctify his name, that is, call upon him for deliverance, not doubting, but when it is to his honour and our profit to be delivered, that he will help. But if he help not, but let us suffer death, happy are we; for then we be delivered from all trouble. And so these three young men sanctified the name of God; they believed that God was a helper: and so, according to their belief, he helped them; marvellously shewing his power, and defending them from the power of the fire.

And this hallowing standeth in all things that may make for the furtherance of God's honour. To hear God's word, and highly to esteem the same, that is hallowing of God's name. How hallow they now the name of God, which refuse to hear the word of God, or for lack of preachers cannot hear it? And how can they believe when they hear it not? Therefore they that do somewhat for the furtherance of learning, for maintaining of schools and scholars, they sanctify God's holy name.

When we say, 'Hallowed be thy name,' we desire God that he, through his goodness, will remove and put away all things that may let and stop the honour of his name. But I fear me there be many which would not that it should be so. We desire here that God will remove all infidelity; we require that all witchcraft, heresy, and popery, may be abolished and extinguished. Farther we require here, that all wicked living may be amended and reformed. Next we require, that all magistrates may do their duties. Finally, we require, that every man in his vocation may do the work whereunto God hath called him.

Farther, we pray that the priests, the spirituality, or the churchmen, as they call them, do their duties, to preach God's word, to live godly, and to give a good example by their conversation; else do they against the honour of God, and their own honesty. Likewise, we pray that servants may do their duties; for to be a servant is an honest estate, and much commended in scripture; and scripture speaketh much to the comfort of them. And truly, those that live in the fear of God,

consider-

considering that they serve not only their carnal masters, but God himself, they be in a good case ; but they may not be eye-servants. St. Paul noteth this fault, and saith, that they shall ' not be murmurers, nor froward answerers.* St. Paul would have them to live so, that they may adorn and sanctify the name of God. For a servant that doth the thing whereunto he is called, he doth adorn his estate. Be not an eye-servant: what thou doest, do from the bottom of thy heart, with a good-will ; for I tell you, you be not forgotten in scripture ; you are much commended in the same. St. Paul speaketh very honourably of you, saying, ' You serve the Lord Christ : '† it becometh you not to put a difference what business you be commanded to do. For whatsoever it be, do it with a good-will, and it is God's service. Therefore you ought to do it, in respect that God would have you to do so ; for I am no more assured in my preaching, that I serve God, than the servant is in doing such business as he is commanded to do ; therefore, for God's sake, consider the matter. Some of you think, if Christ were here, you would go with him and serve him. I tell you, when you follow your service, and do such things as your master and mistress shall command you, you serve him as well as if he were here bodily.

Here I might take occasion to shew how man and wife ought to live together, how they ought to be faithful, loving and friendly one to the other ; how the man ought not to despise the wife, considering that she is partaker with him of everlasting life. Again, see how the woman ought to behave herself towards her husband, how faithful she ought to be. Now when they both yield their duties the one to the other, then they sanctify the name of God ; but when they do contrary to their calling, then they slander his holy name. Therefore let every man and woman walk truly in their calling.

We must have a good and earnest mind and will to sanctify the name of God ; for that person that prayeth,

* Tit. ii. 9.

† Col. iii. 24

and desireth of God that his name may be hallowed, and yet hath no will nor pleasure to do it indeed, that is not the right sanctifying of the name of God. St. Peter teacheth us how we shall sanctify God's name, saying, 'Have a good and holy conversation, living uprightly in your calling ;* so that your light may so shine before men that they may see your good works, and so glorify God.'†

I will trouble you no longer ; it is better a little well received and borne away, than a great deal heard and left behind. Consider wherefore our Saviour commandeth us to call God 'Our Father,' then afterward weigh this, 'Which art in heaven.' Then come to the petition ; 'Hallowed be thy name ;' weigh and consider this. For now it is the very time wherein the name of God should be hallowed. For it is truly a piteous thing to see what rule and dominion the devil beareth, how shameless men be, how the name of God is brought in derision. Therefore let us say from the bottom of our heart, 'Hallowed be thy name ;' that is to say, Lord God, through thy goodness remove all wickedness ; give us grace to live uprightly. And so consider every word ; for it is better one word spoken with good affection, than an hundred without it : yet do I not say this to hinder you from saying the whole Lord's prayer ; but I say, one word well said, is better than a great many otherwise. Read throughout all the scripture, and ye shall find that all faithful men have made but short prayers ; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Hezekiah, our Saviour himself in the garden saith, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.'‡ This was but a short prayer.

So likewise again he saith ; 'Father, forgive them, because they know not what they do.§' The publican praying in the temple made but a short prayer ; saying, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.'|| So the thief hanging upon the cross saith, 'Lord, remember me when

* I. Peter i. 15. † Matt. v. 16. ‡ Luke xxii. 42.

§ Luke xxiii. 34.

|| Ib. xviii. 13.

'thou comest into thy kingdom.'* Here was not much babbling. But I speak not this to dissuade you from long prayer, when the spirit and the affections do serve; for our Saviour himself spent a whole night in prayer.

'Hallowed be thy name;' that is to say, Lord, remove away thy dishonour, remove away sin, move them that be in authority to do their duties, move the man and wife to live rightly, move servants to do well. And so it should be a great grief unto us when we should see any body dishonour the name of God, insomuch that we should cry out, 'Our Father, hallowed be thy name.' This one thing bear away with you above all others; consider that when we will come to God and continue with him, we must be penitent sinners, we must abhor our sins, purpose to leave them, and to live uprightly; which God grant us, even the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

* Luke xxiii. 42.

S E R M O N XVIII.

Being the third of those preached upon

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTHEW vi. 10.

Thy kingdom come.

THIS is the second petition of the Lord's prayer. Thou Father, we beseech thee, let 'Thy kingdom come.' Here we pray that the kingdom of God come not to one only, but to us all. So that when I say this prayer, I require of God that he will let his kingdom come to you as well as to me. Again, when you pray, you pray as well for me as for your ownelves: 'Let thy kingdom come.' You must understand, that to speak properly, these words are not to be understood of God's earthly kingdom, as though it depended upon our petitions, so that he could not be Lord and Ruler over the earth, except we pray for him. No; we pray not for this kingdom; it is come already: he ruleth and governeth all things. He is called in scripture, the 'King above all

Kings, the Lord above all Lords.* Therefore he ruleth and governeth all things according to his will and pleasure; as scripture saith, 'Who will withstand his power will?'†

So our Saviour saith, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work also:‡ what worketh he? He worketh the works of government: for at the first beginning he did create all things. But he left them not so. He assisteth

* Rev. xvii. 4.

† Rom. ix. 19.

‡ John v. 17.

them

them, he ruleth them, according to his will. Therefore our Saviour doth not teach us to pray for his worldly kingdom to come; for he ruleth already as Lord and King, yea, and all the Kings and Rulers rule by him, by his permission, as the scripture witnesseth; 'Through me Kings reign: * through me, that is, by my permission, Kings reign. I would wish of God that all Kings and Potentates in the world would consider this well, and endeavour themselves to use their power to the honour and glory of God, and not to presume in their strength. For this is a good admonition for them, when God saith, 'Through me Kings reign: yea they be so under God's rule, that they can think nothing, nor do any thing, without God's permission. For it is written, 'The heart of the King is in the hands of the Lord, and he turneth the same whithersoever it pleaseth him. † This is good to be considered, and especially subjects should mark this text well; when the rulers be hard, and oppress the people, think ever, the King's heart is in the governance of God. Yea, when thou art led to prison, consider that the governor's heart is in the hand of the Lord.

But our Saviour speaks not of such worldly kingdoms, when he teacheth us to say, 'Thy kingdom come.' For these worldly kingdoms bring us not to worldly felicity; they be full of calamities and miseries, death, perditions, and destructions: therefore the kingdom that he speaketh of, is a spiritual kingdom; a kingdom where God only beareth the rule, and not the devil. This kingdom is spoken of every where in scripture, and was revealed long ago; and daily God hath his preachers, which bring us to the knowledge of this kingdom. Now we pray here that the kingdom of God may be increased, for they are God's subjects that dwell in that kingdom; which kingdom doth consist in righteousness and justice, and it delivereth from all calamities and miseries, from death and all peril.

* Prov. viii. 15.

† Ib. xxi. 1.

And

And in this petition we pray that God will send us his Spirit, which is the leader unto this kingdom; and all those which lack this Spirit shall never come to God. For St. Paul saith, 'Whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ, he pertaineth not unto him.'* Likewise our Saviour saith, 'The kingdom of God is within you.'† Signifying, that those that have the Spirit of God shall be sure of that kingdom; yea, it beginneth here in this world with them that be faithful.

The instrument wherewith we be called to this kingdom, is the office of preaching. God calleth us daily by preachers to come to this kingdom, to forsake the kingdom of the devil, to leave all wickedness. For customary sinners, those that be not content to leave sin, they pertain not to that kingdom; they are under the dominion of the devil, he ruleth them: like as our Saviour saith to the Jews, 'The devil is your father;'‡ also, 'He that doth sin is of the devil.'§ Therefore by this petition we pray, that we may be delivered from all sin and wickedness, from the devil and his power. We desire of God, that we may be his subjects, which is a very godly and needful prayer.

Farther, by this petition we be put in remembrance what we be, namely, captives of the devil, his prisoners, and bondmen, and not able to come at liberty through our own power; therefore we desire God's help and aid, as Christ hath taught us to call him Father; he knew his affections, therefore he commands us to call him Father, and to desire his help to be delivered out of the kingdom of the devil. Happy are those which are in his kingdom, for they shall lack nothing; and this kingdom cometh to us by preaching and by hearing of God's word.

To this heavenly kingdom our Saviour exhorteth us, saying, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall come upon you.'

* Rom. viii. 19.

† John viii. 44.

‡ Luke xvii. 21.

§ 1. John iii. 8.

you.* Therefore our principal study shall be to hear God's word, and when we have heard it, to believe and follow it, every man in his vocation. Then servants shall yield obedience to their masters, as God requireth of them; then the parents shall bring up their children in the fear of God; then children shall be obedient to their parents; then subjects shall be obedient to their king and prince, and all his officers under him: so go throughout all estates, every one shall live uprightly in his calling. Then God will bless us, so that we shall lack no necessities in this world; and then, at the end, we shall come to that perfect felicity and joy that God hath laid up and prepared for them that study here to live according to his will and testament. But we must labour and travail as long as we be in this world; we must be occupied: for St. Paul saith, 'Whosoever will not labour, let him not eat.'† Likewise David saith, 'Thou shalt eat the labours of thy hand, and it shall go well with thee.'‡ For he that will labour for his living, God will prosper him, he shall not lack. Let every man therefore labour in his calling. For so did our Saviour himself, which came into this world to teach us the way to heaven, and to suffer death for us. Now how diligent he hath been in his office, appeareth everywhere; for the Evangelist saith, 'He talked with them of the kingdom of God.'§ Mark here, he taught them of the kingdom of God, he taught them nothing of the kingdom of this world: for he saith, standing before Pilate, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'|| He reigneth by faith through his Holy Ghost, in all those which are given unto him. He is not an earthly king, as the Jews hope to have their Messiah.

Therefore when I feel evil motions within me, then it is time to call upon God, for such motions come of the devil; therefore I must run to God saying, 'Thy kingdom come,' most loving Father; help thou, fight thou

* Matt. vi. 33. † II. Thes. iii. 10. ‡ Ps. cxxviii. 2.

§ Acts i. 3.

|| John xviii. 36.

for me against my enemies ; suffer me not to be taken prisoner ; let not my enemies have the victory over me. So we must call upon God without intermission. For you may be sure we shall never be without battle and travail, and we are not able to withstand our adversary by our own power ; therefore it is needful for us to call and cry unto him for help : if we do so, then we shall have grace to withstand the devil ; for he cannot, neither is he able to strive with God, for all his craft : for the scripture saith, ‘ No wisdom, nor craft can prevail against the Lord.’* He will help and deliver us when he seeth his time. For commonly the method of God is to help when all man’s help is past ; when the devil thinketh himself sure, then God cometh and subverteth his wicked intents, as it appeareth in our Saviour himself. For when the devil had brought the Jews to such a madness that they went and crucified him ; when this was done, the devil triumphed and thought himself sure enough of him. But what was the end of it ? His triumphing was turned into his own destruction ; for Christ hanging upon the cross, did ‘ by his death destroy the power of the devil.’† So we see how God suffereth the devil for a while, and then when he seeth his time, he cometh with his gracious helping hand. But, as I told you before, the devil hath many inventions, many impediments and lets, wherewith he trappeth us : for we see there be a great many gospellers which began very well and godly, but now the most part of them are become ambitious and covetous persons ; all the world is full of such.

But what then ? God will preserve his kingdom ; he will wrestle with the devil’s kingdom, and so shall prevail and pull it down to the bottom. Therefore all those which be in the kingdom of God must wrestle, strive, and fight with the devil : not as the carnal gospellers do, which commonly begin well at the first, but now having rest and tranquillity, and all things going well with them, they leave the gospel, and set their mind upon this

* Prov. xxi. 30.

† Heb. ii. 14.

naughty world. Therefore it is good and needful for us to have afflictions and exercise; for, as St. Augustine saith, 'The blood of the Christians is, as it were, the seed of the gospel.' For when one is hanged here, and another yonder, then God goeth sowing of his seed: for like as the corn that is cast into the ground riseth up again, and is multiplied, even so the blood of one of those which suffer for God's holy word's sake stirreth up a great many, and happy is he to whom it is given to suffer for God's holy word's sake: for it is the greatest promotion that a man can have in this world, to die for God's sake, or to be despised and contemned for his sake; for they shall be well rewarded for their labours—Your reward,' saith our Saviour, 'shall be great in heaven.'*

Farther, when we pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' we desire of God that more may come to the knowledge of God's word; and secondly, we desire of God to bring those which be come already, to the perfect knowledge of his word, and so to keep them in it still to the very end: for not he that beginneth, but 'he that endureth, shall be saved.'†

This kingdom of God is twofold; the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory and felicity. As long as we be in this world, we be in the kingdom of grace; when we are gone, then we shall come to the kingdom of glory. For as long as we be here, God sheweth himself unto us by grace; he ascertaineth us through his Spirit of his favour, and so he reigneth within us by grace: but when we be once gone, then we shall see him face to face, which we cannot as long as we be here; for he exhibiteth himself unto us not so plainly as he doth unto his angels, which be with him in the kingdom of glory. Therefore when we say, 'Thy kingdom come,' we desire of God that he will help us to his perfect kingdom; that he will deliver us out of this troublesome world, and give us everlasting rest.

* Matt. v. 12.

† Ib. x. 22.

I fear there be a great many in England, which if they knew what was meant in speaking these words, 'Thy kingdom come,' they would never say them; for they are so given to the world, and so set their mind upon it, that they could be content that there should never be an end of it. Such worldlings, when they say these words, 'Thy kingdom come,' pray against themselves; for they desire God to take them out of this world speedily, and yet they have all their delight in it. Therefore such worldlings when they say, 'Thy kingdom come,' either mock God, or else they understand not the meaning of the words. But we ought not to trifle with God, we should not mock him, he will not be despised. Let us pray heartily unto him, desirous to have the thing wherefore we pray. But the accustomed impenitent sinner cannot say, from the bottom of his heart, this prayer; for he would have no end of this worldly life, he would have his heaven here. Such are not meet to say, 'Thy kingdom come;' for when they do they pray against themselves. Therefore none can say this petition, but such as be weary of this world; such faithful folk would have him to come speedily, and make an end of their miseries. It is with the Christians like as it is in a realm where there is confusion and no good order; those which are good would fain have a Parliament; for then they think it shall be better with them, they trust all things shall be well amended.

Sometimes the ministry be good, but they please not the wicked, and so they begin to cry out; sometimes they be naught, then the good people cry out; and so they be never at rest. But there is one Parliament that will remedy all the matters, be they never so weighty or heavy, it will dispatch them clean. And this Parliament will be sufficient for all the realms of the world, which is the last judgement, where our Saviour himself will bear the rule: there shall be nothing done amiss, but every one as he hath deserved so he shall have; the wicked shall have hell, the good shall possess heaven. Now this is the thing that we pray for when we say, 'Thy

' kingdom

'kingdom come:' and truly the faithful penitent sinners do desire that Parliament even from the bottom of their hearts; for they know that therein reformation of all things shall be had; they know that it shall be well with them at that day: and therefore they say from the very bottom of their hearts, 'Thy kingdom come.' They know that there shall be a great difference between that Parliament that Christ shall keep, and the Parliaments of this world; for in this world this is the common rule, 'The more wicked, the better luck.' Which is a wonderful thing to consider how it cometh to pass, that for the most part wicked people fare the best; they are in health and wealth, insomuch that a man may much marvel at it, as Esdras, David, and others did: especially considering that God curseth them in his laws, and threateneth them that they shall have none of his benefits; 'If thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, thou shalt be cursed in the field, &c.'*

These be the words of God, which he speaketh against the wicked, and it must needs be so, but yet we see by experience daily the contrary. Wherefore doth God suffer the wicked to subvert his order? The order is, that those which do well, shall receive good things at God's hand, they shall be blessed, and all things shall go well with them. Now, how happeneth it that we see daily the wicked, to have and possess his benefits, and the good to be cursed? Which is a wonderful thing.

God the Almighty, who is most true, yea the truth itself, doth it not without cause. One cause is, that it is his pleasure to shew his benefits as well unto the wicked as to the good; for 'He letteth his sun shine as well over the wicked as over the good.'† And I tell you this is for the exercise of those which serve God; they are promised, that it shall go well with them, and yet have they all the ill. This maketh them to remember that there is another world, wherein they shall be re-

* Deut. xxviii. 16.

† Matt. v. 45.

warded, and so giveth them occasion to seek after it; whereas otherwise they would forget God, if they should have all things according to their hearts desire, as the wicked have; which in very deed do forget God, their mind being so occupied with other business, that they can have no leisure to inquire for God or his kingdom. Again, he suffereth them to turn his order, to the intent that they may be brought to repentance, when they see his great goodness shewed unto them, in that notwithstanding all their wickedness, he suffereth them to enjoy the good things of the world. And so by his benefits he would give them occasion to leave sin and wickedness. As St. Paul saith: 'The goodness of God allureth us to the amendment of our life,'* but when they will not amend, then, 'They heap up to themselves the wrath of God in the day of wrath.'

Now ye have heard the causes wherefore God suffereth the wicked to enjoy his gifts. But I would will and desire you most heartily for God's sake, to consider that the judgement of God at the latter day shall be right, according unto justice; it will then appear who hath been good or bad. And this is the only comfort of all christian people, that they know they shall be delivered from all their troubles and vexations. Let us therefore have a desire that this day may come quickly; let us hasten God forward; let us cry unto him day and night; 'Most merciful Father, thy kingdom come.' St. Paul saith, 'The Lord will not come till the swerving from faith cometh;† which thing is already done: Antichrist is known throughout the whole world. Wherefore the day is not far off. Let us beware, for it will one day fall upon our heads. St. Peter saith, 'The end of all things draweth near.' If St. Peter said so in his time, how much more shall we say so? For it is a long time since St. Peter spake these words.

Therefore learned men gather that the last day cannot be far off. And this is most certain and sure, that when-

* Rom. ii. 4, 5.

† II. Thes. ii. 3.

soever he cometh, he cometh not before his time, for all things which ought to come before, are passed now. So that if he come this night, or to-morrow, he cometh not too early. Therefore, good people, let us make ready towards his coming. And though he cometh not at this time, yet let us make ready; for we are not sure when we shall be called to make account before the Lord. All good and godly people since the world began, endeavoured to make themselves ready toward this day; but, O Lord, how wretched and miserable, yea, and how careless are we! Therefore it shall be like as he saith, 'When they say, all things are well and quiet, then they shall be suddenly taken and perish;' like as Dives that rich glutton did: he eat and drank, he builded a new barn, for the old one was too little for him; then he said to himself, 'Now my soul, be merry and take thy pleasure; for thou hast riches enough for many years.' But what said God? 'Thou fool, this night they will fetch thy soul from thee; whose then shall those riches be which thou hast heaped up?*' And so shall all those be taken and trapped like this glutton, which will not make ready, which refuse the warnings of God; they shall be taken suddenly to everlasting woe.—We have the word of God, we know what is his will; therefore let us watch, 'for he will come like a thief in the night; happy are we if he find us watching.'

This is the effect of this petition, wherein we desire that God will send down faith from heaven, that he will continue in me my faith, and every man's; so that we may be ready to go with him when his kingdom shall come.

Now as many as pertain to the kingdom of God, shall have one property amongst other things; they shall have an earnest and stedfast purpose to leave sin, according to St. Paul's saying, 'Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies.' God's kingdom shall reign in us,

* Luke xii. 16—21.

† Matt. xxiv. 42—44.

and not the devil's: for he hath promised, 'There is no condemnation to such as are in Christ Jesus;' when we do not allow sin nor agree unto it. Therefore dispose yourselves so to live according unto his will; which can and will preserve us from the devil, and bring us into his kingdom: which God grant us, even the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

SERMON

S E R M O N XIX.

Being the fourth of those preached upon

T H E L O R D ' s P R A Y E R .

M A T T H E W vi. 10.

Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

AFTER this form our Saviour, a perfect schoolmaster, taught christian people to pray, ' Our Father, which art in heaven ; thy will be done.' And here he teacheth us two things as he did before in the other petitions : first, he teacheth us to understand what we be of ourselves ; namely, nothing at all, not able to do any thing pleasant to God ; and so he bringeth us down, and humbleth us ; which else would be proud, as though we could do somewhat that we cannot do ; like as those merit-mongers do, who esteem themselves after their merits, think themselves perfect ; insomuch that their works shall not only help themselves, but also others : therefore they take in hand to sell them for money.* But these men know not themselves, and therefore do contrary to this petition.

Secondly, he sheweth us what we shall do ; namely, call upon God our heavenly Father, who will help us, that we may be able to do his will : for of ourselves we are not able to do any thing acceptable unto him. And this is a good doctrine, which admonisheth us to give all praise unto God, and not to ascribe it to our ourselves : for so did St. Paul when he said, ' I am able to do all things,' that appertain to God's honour and glory,

* Our author alludes to the Popish doctrine of supererogation ; that is, a doing more than we are commanded.

through

‘through him that strengtheneth me.’* He said not, through my own self; but through God which helpeth me. And here appeareth the right humiliation and lowliness which our Saviour teacheth us in this petition: for he would have us to know our own inability to do any thing, and then again he would have us to call for aid and help to God; therefore he teacheth us to say, ‘Thy will be done.’ Here we must understand that the will of God is to be considered after two sorts: first, as it is omnipotent, unsearchable, and that cannot be known unto us. Now we do not pray that his will so considered be done. For his will so considered, is and ever shall be fulfilled, though we would say nay to it: for nothing either in heaven or earth is able to withstand his will. Wherefore it were but folly for us to pray to have it fulfilled, otherwise than to shew thereby that we give our consent to his will, which is to us unsearchable.

But there is another consideration of God’s holy will, and that consideration we and all faithful Christians desire may be done: and so considered, it is called a revealed, a manifested, and declared will; and it is opened unto us in the Bible, in the New and Old Testament. There God hath revealed a certain will; therefore we pray that it may be done, and fulfilled of us. This will was opened by Moses and the holy prophets, and afterward by our Saviour himself and his apostles, which he left behind him to that end, that they should instruct the world and teach them his will. Which apostles have done according to their master’s commandment; for they not only spake, but also wrote it, so that it should remain to the world’s end. And truly we are much bound to God, that he hath set out this his will in our natural mother tongue, in English, I say, so that now you may not only hear it, but also read it yourselves; which is a great comfort to every Christian heart: for now you can no more be deceived, as you have been in times past, when we did bear you in hand that popery was the word of God; which falsehood we could not have brought to

* Phil. iv. 13.

pass if the word of God, the Bible, had been abroad in the common tongue. For then you might have perceived yourselves our falshood and blindness. This I speak to move you to thankfulness towards him, which so lovingly provided all things necessary to our salvation.

Now to the matter: Almighty God, I say, set out his will by Moses and his prophets, and this will is contained in certain laws, which laws God commandeth that we should keep ever before our eyes, and look upon them as in a glass, and so learn to order our lives according unto the same. And in case that a man swerve from the same, and so fall into the danger of damnation, God revealed farther his will how to remedy the matter, namely, by repentance and faith. So that whosoever from the bottom of his heart is sorry for his sins, and studieth to leave them and live uprightly, and then believeth in our Saviour, confessing that he came into this world to make atonement for our sins; this man or woman shall not perish, but have forgiveness of sins, and so obtain everlasting life. And this will God revealeth specially in the New Testament, where our Saviour saith, 'Whosoever believeth in me, hath life everlasting;'^{*} where we learn that our Saviour is ordained of God to bring us to heaven, else we should have been all damned world without end. So that in this prayer, when we say, 'Thy will be done;' we desire of God that he will help and strengthen us, that we may keep his holy laws and commandments. And then again we desire of him, that he will endue us with the gift of faith, so that we may believe that all those things which we do contrary to his laws shall be pardoned and forgiven unto us through his Son for his passion's sake. And farther, we desire that he will fortify and strengthen us, so that we may withstand the devil's will and our own, which fight against God's will. So that we may be able to bear all our tribulations and afflictions willingly and patiently,

^{*} John iii. 16.

for his sake. This is the simple meaning of this petition, when we say, 'Thy will be done.'

I will go a little farther, and shew you somewhat more of it. I have said many times, and I now say it yet again, whatsoever we desire of God, let us desire it from the very bottom of our hearts: but I fear there be many which say this prayer, and yet cannot tell what they say, at the least their hearts are disposed contrary unto it. Such people I exhort in God's behalf to consider their duties, to consider that God will not be mocked. We laugh God to scorn when we say one thing with our mouth, and think another with our hearts.

Finally, St. Peter giveth us all a rule, saying; 'It is the will of God that you with your good, godly, and honest conversation shall stop the mouth of your adversaries.*' What called St. Peter well-doing? Well-doing is to live according to God's laws and commandments. God's commandment is, that we should obey magistrates; therefore those which disobey and transgress the laws do not according to God's will and pleasure, they do but mock God, they stop not the mouth of their adversaries, as St. Peter would have them to do; but they give rather occasion unto the wicked to slander and blaspheme the holy word of God. St. Peter would have us stop their mouth with well-doing. Many men when they have been reprov'd of preachers because of their wicked living, they have gone about to stop their mouth with slanderous words; this stopping is an ill stopping. St. Peter would have us to stop them with well-doing. There be some men that cannot away withal if they be rebuked; they cannot bear when the preacher speaketh against their wickedness; unto them I say, 'Will you not be rebuked of the preacher? then do well;† leave off your covetousness, your ambition, your wrath, revenge, and malice, your lewdness, your cruelty, and such like sins; leave them, amend your life, or else the preacher, according to his office, will rebuke and reprove you, be you

* I. Peter ii. 12.

† See Rom. xiii. 3.

never so great lords or ladies : for a good and godly preacher can do no less ; seeing God dishonoured, perceiving him to be blasphemed, his will to be neglected, and not executed of them that ought with all their study and endeavour to apply themselves that his will might be done. For he is well worthy, he is the Lord, he created heaven and earth, and is therefore the right natural Lord over it. But for all that, the devil is lord more than he is, not by right or inheritance, but by usurpation ; God, I say, is the natural and lawful Lord over the whole earth, because he made it ; yet it pleased his divine Majesty to make man, as ye would say, lieutenant over it ; so that as concerning God's ordinance, man was the lawful inheritor of this kingdom.* But now cometh the devil with his crafty conveyances, and with his false subtilties, he inveigleth first the woman, and afterward the man, persuading them to transgress God's holy commandments ; with which doing they lost the favour of God, and their dignities ; and so the devil, through his lies, substituted himself as an usurper ; and so he is a possessor, not lawfully, but wrongfully.

Though he did say to our Saviour, shewing him all the kingdoms of the world, ' I will give them to whomsoever I will.† He lieth falsely ; God will destroy him at the length of all his subtilties and lies ; they shall not save him. Yet for all that he is a great ruler. For this is most certain, a great many more do the will of the devil, than of God ; whatsoever they babble with their mouths, look upon their works, and you shall find it so. For all proud persons, all ambitious persons, which be ever climbing up, and yet never be well, all such do not the will of God, and therefore appertain not to his kingdom : all wrathful, rebellious persons, all quarrellers and wranglers, all blood-shedders, do the will of the devil, and not God's will. Also these subtil, deceitful persons, which make no conscience of defrauding and beguiling their neighbours, that care not for breaking their pro-

* Gen. i. 28.

† Matt. iv. 8, 9.

mises, nor are ashamed to utter false ware, they appertain all to the devil. Also those that will not make restitution of goods ill-gotten, they serve the devil. The scripture saith, 'Whosoever sinneth, is of the devil;'^{*} which is a hard word to be spoken by the Holy Ghost, and a fearful word, able to withdraw us from sin, if we had any fear of God in our hearts. Amongst these may be numbered all slothful persons, which will not work for their livings, they do the will of the devil. God biddeth us to get our living with labour; they will not labour, but go rather about begging, and spoil the very poor and needy. Therefore such idle beggars are thieves before God. Some of these lazy lubbers, when they came to my house I communed with them, burthened them with the transgression of God's laws. Is not this a great labour, say they, to run from one town to another to get our meat? I think we labour as hard as other men do. In such wise they go about to excuse their unlawful beggary and thievery: but such idle lubbers are much deceived; for they consider not that such labour is not allowed of God. We must labour so as may stand with godliness, according to his appointment; else thieves which rob in the night time, do they not labour? Yes, sometimes they labour with great care, peril, and danger of their lives. Is it therefore godly, because it is a labour? No, no; we must labour as God hath appointed us, every man in his estate. Farther, these drunkards which abuse the gifts of God; these whoremongers, that live in adultery; these violators of holy matrimony, which live not according unto God's laws; these swearers, forswearers, liars, all those do not the will of God. Therefore it is to be lamented of every christian heart, when they see how many servants the devil hath, and God so few. But all those which serve the devil, are rebels against God; God was their Lord, they swerve from him through wicked living, and so become servants of the devil. Therefore

* I. John iii. 8. *ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.* 'He who practiseth sin, (*i. e.* habitually and allowedly) is of the devil.' Doddridge.

those christian people that have a desire to live after God's will and commandments, they live amongst the wicked even, as it were, amongst the rebels.

They that dwelled in Norfolk or Devonshire at the time of the rebellion,* they which were faithful to their King and Prince, how think you they were intreated? Full miserably, God knoweth; either they were constrained to help their wicked purposes, or else they must suffer all calamities which could be devised. Even so shall all those be intreated which intend to live well, according to God's commandments. For the rebels, that is, the wicked which have forsaken the Lord God, and taken the devil to be ruler over them, they shall compel them to follow, or else to suffer all calamities and miseries. And so shall be verified the saying of our Saviour Christ, 'I am not come, saith he, to send peace, but the sword.'† Which is indeed a strange saying, but he hath his meaning: God is a God of peace and concord, he loveth unity and concord; but when he cannot have peace, by reason of the devil, then he will have the sword: that is to say, God loveth unity, he would have all agree together, but because of the wicked we cannot; therefore he will rather have us to chuse the sword, that is, to strive and withstand their wickedness, than to agree unto them. And therefore this doctrine is called a seditious doctrine; but who are those rebels? Even they themselves which call this doctrine seditious, they themselves, I say, are traitors against God. Wherefore our Saviour, seeing he can have no peace with the wicked, he will have us rather to withstand their wickedness, and so to bring them to his reformation: and this is the cause wherefore he will have his flock separated from the wicked.

Therefore let us pray unto God our Father, 'Thy will be done.' This is the prayer of all christian people which have a view to God's will; but those impeni-

* The Norfolk Rebellion, headed by Ket, the tanner; and the Devonshire, headed by Arundel and others; both in the year 1549.

† Matt. x. 34.

tent sinners, which are not yet weary of their sins, do never pray; for though they say the words, yet it is to no purpose, they say them without understanding; therefore it is but lip-labour, it is no prayer, it is but the devil's service. For a man may serve the devil, with saying the *Pater-noster*, when he saith it with a defiled mind. Let us therefore order ourselves so, that we may say it worthily as it ought to be. Let us put away all wickedness and ill living, so that we may say from the bottom of our heart, 'Our Father, which art in heaven; thy will be done.' And so did Susanna, that godly woman; so did Lady Judith; so did Queen Esther; so did all the good Saints of God; and though this prayer was not made at that time, yet they had this prayer in effect: for they believed in Almighty God, they believed in Abraham's seed, which was promised; which faith stood them in as good stead, and they were as well saved through the same belief, as we now through our belief. For there is no difference between their belief and ours, but this; they believed in Christ which was to come, and we believe in Christ, which is come already. Now their belief served them as well as ours doth us: for at that time God required no further at their hands than was opened unto them; we have in our time a farther and more perfect knowledge of Christ than they had.

But Saint Peter, what did he? Marry, he forgot his *Pater-noster*; for when there came but a foolish wench, asking him; 'Art not thou a Galilean;'* Art not thou one of this new learning? Art not thou a gospeller? What did Peter? He was gone quite; he denied it; he forgot his *Pater-noster*. For if he had had grace to consider that he ought rather to suffer death than forsake his Master Christ, then he would have said, 'Our Father, thy will be done:' I am ready to suffer for thy sake whatsoever thou shalt lay upon me. But he did not so; he forgot himself. What did our Saviour? He turned back and looked upon him. Happy was Peter

* Mark xiv. 70.

that our Saviour looked upon him again, for it was a gracious token.

Judas, that false man, that traitor, forgot this same petition, and remained so in his error still to the end. Surely he was a sorrowful, and a heavy man, insomuch that he made restitution. He was much better than a great many of us be, which, when they have injured any poor man, will make no restitution; I tell you truth, Judas was much better than such fellows be; restitution leads to repentance, but he lacked faith. And so between Peter and him, which were both two sorrowful men, this was the difference, Peter had faith, Judas lacked it; yet he was exceeding sorrowful for his wickedness, insomuch, that he went and hanged himself; therefore he forgot this petition. So likewise all voluntary sinners, all unrepentant sinners, none of them all say this petition as they ought to do; they say not worthily nor profitably, for they have no will to do his will, their will is to do their own will and pleasure.

Joab, that great and valiant captain, knew well enough when David sent unto him good Uriah with letters; he knew, I say, that the King's will was against God's will, yet he looked through his fingers, he winked at it, he would rather do the wicked will of the King than the will of God. Of such fellows there be a great number, which are not for the honour and will of God. These chaplains about the King, and great men, had need to say, 'Our Father, thy will be done;' but they are very slow and slack; they wink commonly at all matters, be they never so bad; they be chaplains at hand; they dare not 'rebuke the world of sin;* they dare not do as the Prophet commanded them to do, when he saith, 'Let the hills hear the judgements of the Lord;† though they smoke, as he saith, 'Touch the hills and they will smoke.‡' Yea, and though they smoke, yet strike them; spare them not, tell them their faults. But great men cannot suffer to be so rebuked; their chaplain must

* John xvi. 8. † Ezek. vi. 3. ‡ Pf. cxliv. 5.

be taught discretion, if they will go so to work. They say commonly, magistrates should be brought out of estimation, if they should be so handled.

Sirs, I will tell you what you should do to keep your estimation and credit; do well, handle uprightly and indifferently all matters, defend the people from oppressions, do your office as God hath appointed you to do; if you do so, I warrant you, you shall keep your estimation and credit. And I warrant you again, the preacher will not strike nor cut you with his sword; but rather praise you, and commend your well-doing. Else when you do naught, and wickedly oppress the poor, and give false judgements; when you do so, there is no godly preacher that will hold his peace, and not strike you with his sword, that you smoke again. But chaplains will not do their duties, they will not draw their swords, but rather flatter, they will use discretion; but what shall follow? Marry, they shall have God's curse upon their heads for their labour; this shall be all the gain that they shall get by their flatterings.

St. John Baptist, that excellent preacher of God, he said this petition aright with a good faith; 'Our Father, thy will be done.' Therefore he went to the King, saying, 'Sir, it is not lawful for thee so to do.*' See what boldness he had to defend God's honour and glory! But our chaplains, what do they now-a-days? Marry, they wink at it, they will not displease: for they seek livings, they seek benefices, therefore they be not worthy to be God's officers. Isaiah, that faithful minister of God, he telleth them the matter in plain terms, saying, 'Thy silver is turned to dross, thy princes are unfaithful, and fellows of thieves.' He is no flatterer, he telleth them the truth. This Isaiah did; for he had respect to God's word, he perceived things amiss; he knew that it was his part to admonish. Would to God our preachers would be so fervent to promote the honour and glory of God, to admonish the great and the small to do the will

* Matt. xiv. 4.

of the Lord. I pray God they may be as fervent as our Saviour was, when he said to his disciples, 'My meat is to do the will of my Father which is in heaven;'^{*} that is to say, you are not more desirous to eat your meat when you be an hungry, than I am to do my Father's will which is in heaven. By what occasion our Saviour saith these words you shall perceive, when you consider the circumstances. The story is this; He sendeth his disciples to a town to buy meat; where it appears that our Saviour had money: after their departure, he setteth him down, which was a token he was weary, and, I warrant you, he had never a cushion to lay under him. Now, as he was sitting so, there cometh a woman of the town to fetch water; he desireth her to give him drink; she made answer, 'Will you drink with me which am a Samaritan?' So they went forward in their talk: at length he bid her go call her husband; she made answer, 'I have no husband.' 'Thou sayest well,' said our Saviour, 'for thou hast had five, and this that thou hast now is not thy husband.'[†] And so revealed himself unto her. Now the woman went her way into the city, making much ado, how she had found the Messiah, the Saviour of the world; insomuch, that a great many of the Samaritans came out unto him. Now as the woman was gone, the disciples desired him to eat; he made them answer: 'I have other meat;' then they thought somebody had brought him some meat; at length he breaketh out and saith, 'I am as desirous to do my Father's will, as you be of meat and drink.' Let us now, for God's sake, be so desirous to do the will of God, as we be to eat and drink. Let us endeavour ourselves to keep his laws and commandments, that whatsoever we shall desire of him he will give it unto us, we shall have it.

We read oftentimes in scripture, that our Saviour was preaching according to his vocation; I would every man would go so diligently about his business; the priests to go to their books, not to spend their time so shamefully

^{*} John iv. 32, &c.

[†] Ib. ver. 9, &c.

as some do in hawking, hunting, and in alehouses; if they would go to their books, in so doing they should do the will of God; but the most part of them do their own will, they take their pleasure; but God will find them out at length, he will meet with them when he seeth his time. One time,* when our Saviour was preaching, his mother came unto him, very desirous to speak with him, insomuch that she made means to speak with him, interrupting his sermon, which was not good manners. Therefore, (according to St. Augustine and St. Jerom's mind) she was touched a little with vain-glory; she would have been known to be his mother, else she would not have been so hasty to speak with him. And here you perceive that we give her too much, in thinking her to be without any spark of sin, for no one born into this world is without sin, save Christ only. One came and told our Saviour, as he was teaching, 'Sir, thy mother is here, and would speak with thee.' He made answer, like as he did when he was twelve years old; 'I must be about my Father's business:' so he saith now, stretching out his hands, 'Who is my mother? He that doth the will of my Father, which is in heaven.' Luke saith, 'He that heareth the word of God, and doth it.'† Mark saith this well, he saith, 'and doth it;' let us do, let us not only be hearers but doers; then we shall be, according to this promise, his brethren and his sisters; we must hear the word and do it. For, truly, if Mary, his mother, had not heard his word and believed it, she should never have been saved: for she was not saved because she was his mother, but because she believed in him. Remember therefore, that all that do his will, are his brethren and kinsfolk. But remember, that in another place he saith, 'Not all that say, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.'‡ Here you see that the matter standeth not in saying, but in doing; do his will, and then refer unto him, and thou shalt be welcome. We read in Luke, where our Saviour said, 'That servant that knoweth

* Matt. xii, 46—50.

† Luke viii, 21.

‡ Matt. vii, 21.

eth the will of his master, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.* He that knoweth not shall be beaten, but not so much. We must first know and then do; it is a good thing to know, but it is a heinous thing to know, and not to do: it is a great sin to slander God's word with wicked living, as it is commonly seen amongst men. But this fault, if it be not amended, shall have a grievous punishment.

Now some men will say, seeing it is so that 'those which know God's word, and do not the same, shall be beaten with many stripes;' then I will keep me from it, and so when I am damned I shall have the easier punishment. No, no, my friend, wilful ignorance excuseth us not. To say, I will not hear it, or I intend to do as it shall please me; this is not ignorance, brother, but rather contumacy, or despising of God's word. Those which would fain know, but cannot, for that they have no teacher, they shall be excused somewhat, for they shall have less pain than others have; as he saith, 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin, because if in Sodom,'† &c. meaning, that the Sodomites shall have easier judgement than the other. But as for those which refuse to hear when they might hear, they are in an ill case, and shall be punished with unspeakable pains. So we see that ignorance excuseth not altogether; but the ignorant are the less punished, because of their ignorance: as there be degrees in hell, one shall be punished more grievously than another, according to their deserts. There be some men in England which say, No, I will hear none of them all, till they agree amongst themselves. Such truly shall never come to the gospel; for there shall be contentions as long as the devil is alive, he cannot suffer God's word to be spread abroad. Therefore he doth, and will do till the world's end, what he can to hinder the word of God: then it is like that those shall never come to hear God's word, and therefore worthily be damned as despisers of God's most holy word.

* Luke xii. 47, 48.

† Matt. xi. 21.

Farther, this petition hath an addition, 'As it is in heaven.' The writers make two manner of heavens, a spiritual heaven, and a temporal heaven. The spiritual heaven is where God's will is fully done, where the angels be, which do the will and pleasure of God without delay. Now when we say, 'As it is in heaven,' we pray God that we may do his will as perfectly as the angels do. Examples in scripture we have many, which teach us the diligent service which the angels do unto the Lord.

When King David fell into presumption, so that he commanded his captain Joab to number his people, which thing was against the Lord, and Joab did wickedly in obeying the King in such things, he went and numbered eight hundred thousand, and fifty thousand men able to fight, besides women and children. For this act God was angry with David, and sent his Prophet, who told him that God would plague him, and bade him to choose whether he would have seven years hunger, or that his enemies should prevail against him three months long, or to have three days pestilence. He made answer, saying, 'It is better to fall into the hands of God, than of men:' and so chose pestilence. After that, within three days, there died threescore and ten thousand. This story is a great declaration how angry God is with sin. Now David, that good King, seeing the plague of God over the people, said unto God, 'Lord, it is not they that have sinned, it is I myself, punish me, and let them alone.*' This was a good mind in David; there be but few Kings now that would do so. Now at length God was moved with pity, and said unto the angel, 'It is enough, leave off:' by-and-by the plague ceased. Where you may see how ready the angels of God be at the Lord's commandment. After that David was minded to be thankful unto God, and offer a great sacrifice unto him, and so remove the wrath of God; and therefore he made suit to one of his subjects for certain ground to

* II. Sam. xxiv. 17, &c.

build an altar upon ; the same man was willing to give it unto the King freely ; but David would not take it at his hands. Where Kings may learn, that it is not lawful for them to take away other mens' lands to their own use. This good King, David, would not take it when it was offered unto him. He did not as Ahab, the wicked King which did Naboth wrong, in taking away his vineyard against his will.

Another example, wherein appeareth how diligently the angels do God's commandments.—Sennacherib, King of the Assyrians, having a captain called Rabshaca, which captain, after he had besieged Jerusalem, spake blasphemous words against God Almighty, saying to the Jews, 'Think you that your God is able to help you, or to defend you from my hand? '* Now Hezekiah, that good King, hearing such blasphemous words to be spoken against God, fell to prayer, and desired aid of God ; he sent for the Prophet Isaiah, and asked him counsel. The end was, God sent his angels, which killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians in one night ; the King himself hardly escaped, and with great danger and fear gat him home. Here you see what a God our God is, whose will we ought to do. Therefore, let us endeavour ourselves to do his will and pleasure ; and when we are not able to do it, as we be not indeed, let us call unto him for help and aid.

The other heaven is where the sun and the moon, and the stars are ; which heaven doth God's commandment too. As it appeareth in the book of Joshua,† and the Kings,‡ how the sun stood still at the commandment of God ; also how the shadow went backward ; like as Job saith, 'Thou gavest commandment to the sun, and it arose not.'§ Therefore, at the commandment of God, they kept their ordinary course, as God hath commanded them in the first beginning : also the rain and the snow come at his commandment. Finally, nothing rebelleth in the

* II. Kings xviii, xix.

† Josh. x. 13.

‡ II. Kings xx. 11.

§ Job ix. 7.

estate wherein it was set at the first, but man only; man will not be ruled by him, all other things be obedient: rain cometh when God will have it, and snow at his time. We read in Ahab's time, that Elias the Prophet stopped the rain for three whole years and six months, to punish the people; whereof followed a great dearth. Afterward, at the request of the same Elias, God sent rain, which tempered the ground to bring fruits. I think there is some Elias abroad at this time, which stoppeth the rain, we have had no rain a great while. Therefore let us pray to God that we may do his will, and then we shall have all things necessary to soul and body. For what was this Elias? A sinful man, born and conceived in sin:* yet God granted his request; for he was a man that feared the Lord, and trusted in him: therefore God loved him, and heard his prayer. Therefore, I say, let us do as he did, then God will hear our prayers; but we are carnal, we can do nothing perfectly as we ought to do: wherefore we may say with St. Augustine, 'Lord, do thou with me what thou commandest, and then command what thou wilt.' For we of our own strength and power are not able to do his commandments; but that lack our Saviour will supply with his fulfilling; and with his perfectness, he will take away our imperfectness. Now since we have spoken much of prayer, I will desire you that we may pray together, and so make an end; but you must pray with a penitent heart; for God will not hear the prayer that proceedeth from an impenitent heart; it is abominable in his sight: I desire you to say after me, '*Our Father,*' &c. *Amen.*

* James v. 17, 18.

S E R M O N XX.

Being the fifth of those preached upon

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTHEW VI. 11.

Give us this day our daily bread.

THIS is a very good prayer, if a body should say no more at one time but that; for as we see our need, so we shall pray; when we see God's name to be dishonoured, blasphemed and ill spoken of, then a man, a faithful man, should say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' When we see the devil reign, and all the world follow his kingdom, then we may say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, thy kingdom come.' When we see that the world followeth her own desires and lusts, and not God's will and his commandments, and it grieveth us to see this, and we are sorry for it; we shall make our moan unto God for it, saying, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, thy will be done.' When we lack necessaries for the maintenance of this life, and every thing is dear, then we may say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread.' Therefore as we see cause, so should we pray. And it is better to say one of these short prayers with a good faith, than the whole psalter without faith.

'Give us this day our daily bread.' Every word is to be considered, for they have their importance. This word 'bread,' signifieth all manner of subsistence for the prefer-

preservation of this life; all things whereby man should live, are contained in this word 'bread.'

You must remember what I said of that petition, 'Hallowed be thy name.' There we pray unto God, that he will give us grace to live so, that we may with all our conversations and doings, hallow and sanctify him, according as his word telleth us. Now, forasmuch as the preaching of God's word is most necessary to bring us unto this hallowing, we pray in the same petition for the office of preaching: so likewise in this petition, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' we pray for all those things which be necessary and requisite to the subsistence of our souls and bodies. Now, in the first place, we pray for magistrates; without a magistrate we should never live well and quietly: then it is necessary and most needful to pray unto God for them, that the people may have rest, and apply to their business, every man in his calling, the husbandman in his tilling and ploughing, the artificer in his business.

They that be children, and live under the rule of their parents, or have tutors, they pray in this petition for their parents and tutors, for they be necessary for their bringing up; and God will accept their prayers, as well as theirs which be of age: for God hath no respect of persons, he is as ready to hear the youngest as the oldest; therefore let them be brought up in godliness, let them know God. Let parents and tutors do their duties to bring them up so, that as soon as their age serveth, they may taste and favour God; let them fear God in the beginning, and so they shall do also when they be old.

It is a common speech amongst the people, and much used, that they say, all religious houses are pulled down; which is a very peevish saying, and not true, for they are not pulled down. That man and that woman that live together godly and quietly, doing the works of their vocation, and fear God, hear his word and keep it; that same is a religious house; that is, the house that pleaseth God. For religion, pure religion, I say, standeth not in wearing of a Monk's cowl, but in righteousness,
justice,

justice, and well-doing; and, as St. James saith, in 'visiting the orphans and widows.'* The other which was used, was an irreligious life, yea, rather an hypocrisy. There is a text in scripture, if my memory fail me not, which says, 'There is a way, which way seemed to men to be good, whose end is eternal perdition:† when the end is naught, all is naught.'

So were these monks' houses, these religious houses; there were many people, especially widows, which would give over house-keeping, and go to such houses, when they might have done much good in maintaining of servants, and relieving of poor people, but they went their ways. What a madness was that!

Again, how much cause have we to thank God, that we know what true religion is, that God hath revealed unto us the deceitfulness of those monks, which had a goodly shew before the world of great holiness, but they were naught within. Therefore the scripture saith, 'That which is highly esteemed before men, is abominable before God.‡' Therefore that man and woman that live in the fear of God, are much better than their houses were.

I read once a story of a holy man (some say it was St. Anthony) which had been a long season in the wilderness, neither eating nor drinking any thing but bread and water; at the length he thought himself so holy, that there should be no body like unto him; therefore he desired of God to know who should be his fellow in heaven. God made him answer, and commanded him to go to Alexandria, there he should find a cobbler which should be his fellow in heaven. So he went thither and sought him out, and got acquainted with him, and tarried with him three or four days to enjoy his conversation. In the morning his wife and he prayed together, then they went to their business, he in his shop, and she about her housewifery. At dinner time they had bread and cheese, where-with they were well content, and took it thankfully.

* James i. 27.

† Prov. xiv. 12.

‡ Luke xvi. 15.

Their children were well taught to fear God, and to say their *Pater-noster*, and the Creed, and the Ten Commandments ; and so he spent his time in doing his duty truly. I warrant you he did not so many false stitches as cobblers do now-a-days. St. Anthony perceiving that, came to the knowledge of himself, and laid aside all pride and presumption.

By this example you may learn, that honest conversation and godly living are much regarded before God, in so much, that this poor cobbler, doing his duty diligently, was made St. Anthony's fellow. So it appeareth, that we be not destitute of religious houses ; those which apply to their business uprightly and hear God's word, they shall be numbered among the children of God.

Farther, in this petition, the man and wife pray one for the other ; for one is a help unto the other, and so necessary the one to the other, therefore they pray one for the other, that God will spare them their lives, to live together quietly and godlily, according to his ordinance and institution ; and this is good and needful. As for such as be not married, you shall know that I do not so much praise marriage, that I should think that single life is naught ; as I have heard some which will scarce allow of single life. Truth it is, ' Marriage is good and honourable amongst all men,' as St. Paul witnesseth : ' And the Lord shall and will judge, that is, condemn adulterers, and whoremongers ;' * but not those which live godlily and honestly in single life, it is well and allowable before God ; yea, and better than marriage : for St. Paul saith, ' I will have you to be without carefulness,' that is, unmarried ; and sheweth its usefulness, saying, ' they that be unmarried, set their minds upon God, how to please him, and to live after his commandments. But as for the other, the man is careful how to please his wife ; and, again, the woman how to please her husband :' † and this is St. Paul's saying of the one as well as the other. Therefore I will wish

* Heb. xiii. 4.

† I. Cor. vii. 32—34.

you not to condemn single life; but take the one with the other, like as St. Paul teacheth us; not so to extol the one, that we condemn the other.

Farther, we pray here in this petition for good servants, that God will send unto us good, faithful, and trusty servants, for they are necessary for this bodily life, that our business may be done; and those which live in single life have more need of good trusty servants than those which are married; those which are married can better oversee their servants: for when the man is from home, at the least his wife overseeth them, and keepeth them in good order. For I tell you, servants must be over-seen and looked to; if they be not over-seen, what be they? It is a great gift of God to have a good servant, for the most part of servants are but eye-servants; when their master is gone, they leave off from their labour, and play the sluggards; but such servants do contrary to God's commandment, and shall be damned for their slothfulness, except they repent.

There was once a fellow asked a philosopher a question, saying, 'How is a horse made fat?' The philosopher presently made him answer, 'With his master's eye.' Not meaning that the horse should be fed with his master's eye, but that the master should over-see the horse, and take heed to the hostler, that the horse might be fed. For when a man rideth by the way, and cometh to his inn, and giveth to the hostler his horse to walk, and so himself sitteth at the table and maketh good cheer, and forgetteth his horse, the hostler cometh and saith, Sir, how much corn shall I give unto your horse? He saith, give him two penny worth: I warrant his horse shall never be fat. Therefore a man should not say to the hostler, Go give him, but he should see himself that the horse has it. In like manner, those that have servants must not only command them what they shall do, but they must see that it be done; they must be present, or else it shall never be done. Another man asked the same philosopher this question, saying, 'What dung is it that maketh a man's land most fruitful in bringing forth

'much corn?' 'Marry,' said he, 'the owner's foot-
'steps.' Not meaning that the master should come and
walk up and down and tread the ground; but he would
have him to come and oversee the servants tilling of the
ground, commanding them to do it diligently, and so to
look upon their work; this shall be the best dung, saith
the philosopher. Therefore never trust to servants, ex-
cept you are assured of their diligence. For I tell you
truly, I can come no where but I hear masters complain-
ing of their servants. I think they fear not God, they
consider not their duties. Well, I will burthen them
with this one text of scripture, and then go forward in
my matter: the Prophet Jeremiah saith, 'Curfed be he
'that doth the work of the Lord negligently,' or 'fau-
'dulently;'* take which you will.

Now farther, whosoever prayeth this prayer with a
good and faithful heart, as he ought to do; he prayeth
for all ploughmen and husbandmen, that God will prof-
per and increase their labour, for except he give increase,
all their labour is lost. Therefore it is needful to pray
for them, that God may send his benediction on their
labour, for without corn and such manner of sustenance
we cannot live. And in that prayer we include all artifi-
cers; for by their labours, God giveth us many commo-
dities which we could not well do without.

We pray also for wholesome air; likewise for season-
able weather; when we have too much rain, we pray for
fair weather: again, when we lack rain, we pray that
God will send rain. And in that prayer we pray for our
cattle, that God will preserve them to our use from all
diseases; for without cattle we cannot live, we cannot till
the ground, nor have meat, therefore we include them in
our prayer,

So we see that this prayer containeth innumerable
things. For we pray for all such things as be expedient
and needful for the preservation of this life: and not
this alone, but we have here good doctrine and divers ad-
monitions besides,

* Jer. xlviii. 10.

For here we be admonished of the liberality of God our heavenly Father, which he sheweth daily unto us. For our Saviour knowing the liberality of God our heavenly Father, commanded us to pray: if he would not give us the things we ask, Christ would not have commanded us to pray. But our Saviour knowing his liberal heart towards us, commanded us to pray, and desire all things at his hands.

And here we be admonished of our estate and condition, what we be, namely, beggars. For we ask bread; of whom? Marry, of God. What are we then? Marry, beggars: the greatest lords and ladies in England are but beggars before God. Seeing then that we all are but beggars, why should we then disdain and despise poor men? Let us therefore consider that we be but beggars: let us humble ourselves; for if we consider the matter well, we are like as they be before God: for St. Paul saith, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received of God?*' Thou art but a beggar whatsoever thou art: and though there be some very rich, and have great abundance, of whom have they it? Of God: What saith the rich man? He saith, 'Our Father which art in heaven; give us this day our daily bread;' then he is a beggar before God as well as the poorest man. Farther, how continueth the rich man in his riches? Who made him rich? Marry, God. For it is written, 'The blessing of God maketh rich:† except God bless it, it standeth to no effect; for it is written, 'They shall eat, but yet never be satisfied.‡ Eat as much as you will, except God feed you, you shall never be full. So likewise as rich as a man is, yet he cannot augment his riches, or keep that he hath, except God be with him, except he bless him; therefore let us not be proud, for we be but beggars the best of us.

Note here, that our Saviour biddeth us to say, 'us.' This *us* includeth all other men with my prayer; for every one of us prayeth one for another. When I say,

* I. Cor. iv. 7.

† Prov. x. 22.

‡ If. ix. 10.

' Give

'Give us this day our daily bread,' I pray not for myself only, if I ask as he biddeth me, but I pray for all others. Wherefore say I not, 'Our Father, give *me* this day *my* daily bread;' for because God is not my God alone, he is a common God. And here we be admonished to be friendly, loving and charitable one to another; for what God giveth, I cannot say, this is my own; but I must say, this is ours. For the rich man cannot say, this is my own, God hath given it unto me for my own use; nor yet hath the poor man any title unto it, to take it away from him. No, the poor may not do so; for when he doth so, he is a thief before God and man: but yet the poor man hath title to the rich man's goods, so that the rich man ought to let the poor man have part of his riches to help and comfort him withal. Therefore when God sendeth unto me much, it is not mine, but ours; it is not given unto me alone, but I must help my poor neighbours withal.

But here I must ask you rich men a question. How chanceth it you have your riches? We have them of God, you will say. But by what means have you them? By prayer, you will say: we pray for them unto God, and he giveth us the same. Very well. But pray now tell me, what do other men which are not rich? Pray they not as well as you do? Yes, you must say; for you cannot deny it. Then it appeareth that you have your riches not through your own prayers only, but other men help you to pray for them; for they say as well, 'Our Father, give us this day our daily bread,' as you do; and peradventure they be better than you be, and God heareth their prayers sooner than yours. And so it appeareth most manifestly that you obtain your riches of God, not only through your own prayers, but through other mens' too. Other men help you to get them at God's hand. Then it followeth, that seeing you get not your riches alone through your own prayer, but through the poor man's prayer also, it is meet that the poor man should have part of them, and you ought to relieve his necessity and poverty.

But

But what meaneth God by this inequality, that he giveth to some an hundred pounds, unto this man five hundred pounds, but unto this man in a manner nothing at all? What meaneth he by this inequality? Here he meaneth, that the rich ought to distribute his riches abroad amongst the poor: for the rich man is but God's treasurer, he ought to distribute them according to his Lord God's commandment. If every man were rich, then no man would do any thing; therefore God maketh some rich and some poor. Again, that the rich may have whereon to exercise his charity, God made some poor: the poor he sendeth unto the rich to desire of him in God's name help and aid. Therefore, you rich men, when there cometh a poor man unto you, desiring your help, think no otherwise but that God hath sent him unto you, and remember that thy riches be not thy own, but thou art but a steward over them. If thou wilt not do it, then cometh in St. John, who saith, 'He that hath the substance of this world, and seeth his brother lack, and helpeth him not, how remaineth the love of God in him?'

* He speaketh not of them that have it not, but of them that have it: that same man loveth not God, if he help not his neighbour, having wherewith to do it. This is a sore and hard word: there be many which say with their mouth, they love God: and if a man should ask this multitude here, whether they love God or no, they would say, yes, God forbid else. But if you consider their unmercifulness unto the poor, you shall see, as St. John said, 'The love of God is not within them.' Therefore you rich men ever consider of whom you have your riches, be it a thousand pounds, yet you fetch it out of this petition. For this petition, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' is God's store-house, God's treasure-house: here lieth all his provision, and here you fetch it.

Again, this petition is a remedy against the wicked carefulness of men, when they seek how to live, and

* I. John iii. 17.

how to get their livings, in such wise, like as if there were no God at all. And then there be some which will not labour as God hath appointed unto them; but rather give themselves to falshood, to sell false ware, and deceive their neighbours, or to steal other mens' goods. O what falshood is used in England, yea, in the whole world! It were no marvel if the fire from heaven fell upon us, like as it did upon the Sodomites, only for our falshood's sake. I will tell you of a false practice, that was practised in my country where I dwell: but I will not tell it you to teach you to do the same, but rather abhor it. I have known some that had a barren cow, and they would fain have had a great deal of money for her, therefore they go and take a calf of another cow, and put it to this barren cow, and so come to the market, pretending that this cow hath brought this calf, and so they sell their barren cow six or eight shillings dearer than they should have done else. The man which bought the cow cometh home, peradventure he hath a number of children, and hath no more cattle but this cow, and thinketh he shall have some milk for his children; but when all cometh to all, this is a barren cow, and so this man is deceived. The other fellow that sold the cow, thinketh himself a wise trader, and he is called one that can make shift for himself. But I tell thee, whosoever thou art, do so if thou durst; and thou art as very a thief as when thou takest a man's purse from him going by the way, and thou sinnest against this commandment, 'Thou shalt do no theft.'

I will tell you another falshood. I know that some husbandmen go to the market with a quarter of corn: now they would fain sell the worst dear, as well as the best, therefore they use this policy; they go and put a strike of fine malt or corn in the bottom of the sack, then they put two strikes of the worst they had, then a good strike at top, in the sack's mouth, and so they come to the market. Now there cometh a buyer, asking, Sir, is this good malt? I warrant you, saith he, there is no better in this town; and so he selleth all the malt or

corn

corn for the best, when there be but two strikes of the best in his sack. The man that buyeth it, thinketh he hath good malt, he cometh home; when he putteth the malt out of the sack, the strike which was in the bottom covereth the ill malt which was in the middle, and so the good man shall never perceive the fraud, till he cometh to the using of the corn: the other man that sold it, taketh this for a policy, but it is theft before God, and he is bound to make restitution of so much as those two strikes which were naught, were sold too dear; so much he ought to restore, or else he shall never come to heaven, if God be true in his word.

I could tell you of one other falshood, how they make wool to weigh much, but I will not tell it you. If you learn to do those falshoods whereof I have told you now, then take the clause with it; namely, that you shall never see the bliss of heaven, but be damned world without end, with the devil and his angels: now go when it please you, use falshood. But I pray you, wherefore will you deceive your neighbour, whom you ought to love as well as your own self? Consider the matter, good people, what a dangerous thing it is to fall into the hands of the ever-living God: leave falshood; abhor it, be true and faithful in your calling, 'Seek ye the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof; then all things necessary for you, shall come unto you unlooked for.'*

Therefore in this petition, note first, God's goodness, how gentle he is towards us, insomuch that he would have us to come unto him and take of him all things. Then again, note what we be, namely, beggars, for we beg of him; which admonisheth us to leave stoutness and proudness, and to be humble.

There be some men which would have this petition not to import and contain these bodily things, as things which be too vile to be desired at God's hand; therefore they expound it altogether spiritually, of things pertaining unto the soul only, which opinion truly I do not

* Matt. vi. 33.

greatly like ; for that I trust God for my soul, and shall I not trust him for my body ? Therefore I take it that all things necessary for soul and body are contained in this petition ; and we ought to seek all things necessary to our bodily food, only in this storehouse.

But you must not take my sayings after such sort, as though you should do nothing but sit and pray ; and yet you should have your dinner and supper made ready for you. No, not so ; but you must labour, you must do the work of your vocation. ‘ Seek the kingdom of heaven ;’ you must set those things together, Work and Prayer. He that is true in his vocation and calling, doing according as God willeth him to do, and then prayeth unto God ; that man or woman may be assured of their living ; as sure, I say, as God is true. As for the wicked, God of his exceeding mercy and liberality findeth them ; and sometimes they fare better than the good man doth : but for all that the wicked man hath ever an ill conscience ; he doth wrong unto God, he is an usurper, he hath no right unto it : the good and godly man he hath right unto it, for he cometh by it lawfully, by his prayer and pains. But these covetous men, think ye they say this prayer with a faithful heart, ‘ Our Father, which art in heaven ; give us this day our daily bread ?’ Think ye they say it from the bottom of their hearts ? No, no ; they do but mock God, they laugh him to scorn, when they say these words : for they have their bread, their silver and gold in their chests, or in their bags ; therefore they have no favour of God ; else they would shew themselves liberal unto their poor neighbours, they would open their chests and bags, and lay out and help their brethren in Christ. They be as yet but scorers ; they say this prayer like as the Turks might say it.

Consider this word ‘ Give ;’ certainly we must labour, yet we must not so magnify our labour as though we got our living by it ; for labour as long as thou wilt, thou shalt have no profit by it, except the Lord give thee increase for thy labour. Therefore we must thank him for it ; he doth it, he giveth it ; to whom ? unto him that laboureth

laboureth and prayeth : that man that is so disposed shall not lack, as he saith, ' He will give the Holy Ghost unto them that desire the same.'* Then we must ask ; for he giveth not to sluggards ; indeed they have his benefit ; they live wealthily ; but I told you before, they have it with an ill conscience, not lawfully. Therefore Christ saith, ' He suffers his sun to rise upon the just and unjust.'† Also, ' We cannot tell outwardly by these worldly things, which be in the favour God, and which be not : ‡ for they be common unto good and bad ; but the wicked have it not with a good conscience. The upright good man hath his living through his labour and faithful prayer ; beware that you trust not in your labour, as though you got your living by it : for, as St. Paul saith, ' Neither he that planteth is ought, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.'§ Except God give the increase, all our labour is lost. They that be the children of this world, as covetous persons, extortioners, oppressors, and usurers, think you they come to God's storehouse ? No, no, they do not ; they cannot tell what it meaneth ; for they look not to get their livings at God's storehouse, but they rather think to get it with deceit and falsehood, with oppression, and wrong doings : for they think, that all things be lawful unto them ; they therefore think that though they take other mens' goods through subtilty and craft, it is no sin.

But I tell you, those things which we buy, or get with our labour, or are given us, by inheritance or otherwise, those things be ours by the law. Now all things gotten otherwise are not ours ; as other things which be gotten by those crafty conveyances, by guile and fraud, by robbery and stealing, by extortion and oppression, or however you come by it beside the right way, it is not yours ; inasmuch that you may not give it for God's sake, for God hateth it.

Remember this word ' Our ; ' what it meaneth I told you. And here I have occasion to speak of the proper-

* Luke. xi. 13.

† Matt. v. 45.

‡ Eccl. ix. 1.

§ 1. Cor. iii. 7.

ties of things: for I fear, if I should leave it so, some of you would report of me wrongfully, and affirm, that all things should be common; I say not so. Certain it is, that God hath ordained proprieties of things, so that that which is mine, is not thine; and what thou hast I cannot take from thee. If all things be common, there could be no theft, and so this commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal,' were in vain; but it is not so: the laws of the realm make, *mine* and *thine*. If I have things by those laws, then I have them well. But this you must not forget, that St. Paul saith, 'Relieve the necessity of those which have need.'* Things are not so common that another man may take my goods from me, for this is theft; but they are so common, that we ought to distribute them unto the poor, to help them, and to comfort them with it; we ought one to help another; for this is a standing sentence, 'He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother to have need, and shutteth up his entire affection from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'

There was a certain manner of having things in common in the time of the apostles. For some good men, as Barnabas was, sold their lands and possessions, and brought the money unto the apostles: but that was done for this cause; there was a great many christian people at that time intreated very ill, insomuch that they left all their goods; now such folk came to the apostles for aid and help. Therefore those which were faithful men, seeing the poverty of their brethren, went and sold what they had, and spent the money amongst such poor as were newly made Christians. Amongst others which sold their goods, there was one Ananias, and Saphira his wife,† two very subtil persons, they went and sold their goods too, but they played a wise part, they would not stand in danger of the losing of their goods; therefore they agreed together and took the one part of the money and laid it up; with the other part they came to Peter,

* Rom. xii. 13.

† Acts v. 1—11

affirming that to be the whole money : for they thought in their hearts, like as all unfaithful men do, we cannot tell how long this religion shall abide ; it is good therefore to be wise, and keep somewhat in store, whatsoever may happen. Now Peter knowing by the Holy Ghost their falsehood, first slew him with one word, and after, her too ; which indeed is a fearful example, whereby we should be admonished to beware of lies and falsehood. For though God punish thee not presently, as he did this Ananias, yet he shall find thee, surely, he will not forget thee. Therefore learn here to take heed of falsehood, and beware of lies.

But you will say, here is a marvellous doctrine, which commandeth nothing but give, give ; if I should follow this doctrine, I should give so much, that at length I shall have nothing left for myself. These be the words of infidelity ; he that speaketh such words, is a faithless man. And I pray you tell me, Have ye heard of any man that came to poverty, because he gave unto the poor ? No, I am sure you have not. And I dare lay my head to pledge for it, that no man living hath come, or shall hereafter come to poverty because he hath been liberal in helping the poor : for God is a true God, and no liar ; he promiseth us in his word, that we shall have more by giving the needy ; therefore the way to get, is to scatter that you have. Give, and you shall gain. If you ask me, How shall I get riches ? I make thee this answer : Scatter that thou hast ; for giving, is gaining. But you must take heed, and scatter it according unto God's will and pleasure ; that is, to relieve the poor withal ; to scatter it amongst the flock of Christ ; whosoever giveth so, shall surely gain ; for Christ saith, ' Give, and it shall be given unto you.' This is a sweet word, we can well away with that ; but how shall we come by it ? Why, Give.

For to give alms, is like as when a man cometh unto me, and desireth an empty purse of me ; I lend him the purse, he cometh by-and-by and brings it full of money, and gives it me ; so that I have now my purse again, and

the money too. So it is to give alms, we lend an empty purse, and take a full purse for it. Therefore let us persuade ourselves in our hearts, that to give for God's sake is no loss unto us, but great gain. And truly the poor man doth more for the rich in taking things of him, than the rich doth for the poor in giving them; for the rich giveth out only worldly goods, but the poor giveth him by the promise of God all felicity.

'Daily.' Here we learn to cast away all carefulness, and to come to the storehouse of God, where we shall have all things competent both for our souls and bodies. Farther, in this petition we desire that God will feed not only our bodies but also our souls; and so we pray for the office of preaching: for like as the body must be fed daily with meat, so the soul requireth her meat, which is the word of God. Therefore we pray here for all the clergy, that they may do their duties, and feed us with the word of God according to their calling. Now I have troubled you long, therefore I will make an end. I desire you to remember to resort to this storehouse; whatsoever ye have need of, come hither, here are all things necessary for your soul and body, only ask for them. But you have heard how you must labour to do your duties, and then come, and you shall find all things necessary for you: and especially now at this time let us resort unto God, for there is a great drought, as we think, and we have need of rain. Let us therefore resort unto our loving Father, who promiseth, that when we call upon him with a faithful heart, he will hear us. Let us therefore desire him to rule the matter so, that we may have our bodily sustenance; we have the example of Elias, whose prayer God heard: therefore let us pray this prayer, which our Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ himself taught us, saying, '*Our Father, which art in heaven,*' &c. Amen.

S E R M O N XXI.

Being the sixth of those preached upon

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTHEW vi. 12.

*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that
trespass against us.*

THIS is a very good prayer, if it be said in faith with the whole heart. There was never any one that did say it with the heart, but he had forgiveness, and his trespasses and all his sins were pardoned and taken from him.

'Forgive:' who is there in this world which hath not need to say, 'Lord, forgive me?' No man living; nor ever was, or shall be any, our Saviour only excepted; he was 'an undefiled Lamb.' Truly, no saint in heaven: be they as holy as ever they will, yet had they once need to say, 'Lord, forgive us our trespasses.' Now you ask, wherein standeth our righteousness? Answer, in this, that God forgiveth unto us our unrighteousness. Wherein standeth our goodness? In this, that God taketh away our illness; so that our goodness standeth in his goodness.

In the other petition we desire all things necessary for our bodily life, as long as we be in this world; 'For every man hath a certain time appointed him of God, and God hideth the same time from us.'* For some die in young age, some in old age, according as it pleaseth him. He hath not manifested to us the time, because he would have us at all times ready; else if I knew the time, I should presume upon it, and so should be worse; but

* See Job vii. 1.

he would have us ready at all times, and therefore he hideth the time of our death from us. And it is a common saying, there come as many skins of calves to the market, as do of bulls or kine. But of that we may be sure, there shall not fall one hair from our head without his will; and we shall not die before the time that God hath appointed unto us; which is a comfortable thing, especially in time of sickness or wars: for there be many men which are afraid to go to war, and to do the King service, for they fear ever they shall be slain.

Also vicars and parsons be afraid when there cometh a sickness in the town; therefore they were wont commonly to get themselves out of the way, and send a friar thither, which did nothing else but rob and spoil them: which doings of the vicar was damnable, for it was a diffidence and distrust in God. Therefore, ye vicars and curates, what name soever ye bear, when there cometh any sickness in your town, leave not your flock without a pastor, but comfort them in their distress, and believe certainly, that with your well doings you cannot shorten your lives. Likewise thou subject, when thou art commanded by the King, or his officers, to go to war, to fight against the King's enemies, go with a good heart and courage, not doubting but that God will preserve thee, and that thou canst not shorten thy life with well doing. Peradventure God hath appointed thee to die there, or to be slain; happy art thou when thou diest in God's quarrel: for to fight against the King's enemies, being called unto it by the magistrates, it is God's service; therefore when thou diest in that service with good faith, happy art thou.

There be some which say, when their friends are slain in battle, O, if he had tarried at home, he would not have lost his life. These sayings are naught, for God hath appointed every man his time. To go to war is presumptuousness, without any ordinary calling; such going to war I allow not: but when thou art called, go in the name of the Lord; and be well assured in thy heart,

heart, that thou canst not shorten thy life with well doing.

'Forgive us.' Here we sue for our pardon; and so we acknowledge ourselves to be offenders; for the unguilty needeth no pardon. This pardon, or remission of sins, is so necessary, that no man can be saved without it. Therefore of remission standeth the Christian man's life; for so saith David, 'They are blessed of God, whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.'* He saith not; blessed be they which have never sinned; for where dwelleth such persons which never sinned? Marry, no where; they are not to be found. Here the prophet signifieth, that we all are sinners; for he saith, 'whose sins are pardoned.' And here we be painted out in our true colours; he giveth us our title and name, calling us wicked and ill. There is neither man nor woman that can say they have no sin, for we be all sinners: but how can we hide our sins? Certainly the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ hideth our sins and washeth them away. And though one man had done all the world's sins since Adam's time, yet he might be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ; if he believe in him, he should be cleansed from all his sins. Therefore all our comfort is in him, in his love and kindness; for St. Paul saith, 'Charity covereth the multitude of sins.'† So it doth indeed; the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ, his love towards us, covereth and taketh away all our sins, insomuch that Almighty God will not condemn us, neither shall the devil prevail against us. Our nature is ever to hide sin, and to cloak it; but this is a wicked hiding, and this hiding will not serve, for 'He seeth our wickedness, and he will punish it';‡ therefore our hiding cannot serve us: but if you be disposed to hide your sins, I will tell you how you shall hide them.

First, acknowledge them, and then believe in our Saviour Christ, put him in trust withal; he will pacify his

* Ps. xxxii. 1.

† I. Pet. iv. 8,

‡ Job. xi. 11,

Father ; for, ' to that end he came into the world, to ' save sinners.'* This is the right way to hide sins, not to go and excuse them, or to make them no sins. No, no ; the Prophet saith, ' Blessed is the man to whom the ' Lord imputeth not his sins.'

And so here in this petition we pray for remission of our sins, which is so requisite to the beginning of the spiritual life, that no man can come thereto, except he pray for remission of sins, which standeth in Christ our Redeemer ; he hath washed and cleansed us from our sins, by him we shall be clean. But how shall we come to Christ ? How shall we have him ? I hear that he is beneficial, as scripture witnesseth, ' There is full and plenteous redemption by him.'† But how shall I get that ? How shall I come unto it ? By faith : faith is the hand wherewith we receive his benefits ; therefore we must needs have faith. But how shall we obtain faith ? Faith, indeed, bringeth to Christ, and Christ bringeth remission of sins ; but how shall we obtain faith ? Answer, St. Paul teacheth us this, saying, ' Faith cometh by hearing God's word.' Then if we will come to faith, we must hear God's word ; if God's word be necessary to be heard, then in this petition we pray for preachers ; we pray unto God, that he will send men amongst us, which may teach us the way of everlasting life. So we pray for the office which bringeth faith ; faith bringeth to Christ ; Christ bringeth remission of sins ; remission of sins bringeth everlasting life.

O this is a godly prayer, which we ought at all times to say, for we sin daily, therefore we have need to say daily, forgive us our trespasses ; and as David saith, ' Lord, ' enter not into judgement with thy servant,'‡ for we be not able to abide his judgement ; if it were not for this pardon which we have in our Saviour Jesus Christ we should all perish eternally : for when this word ' forgive,' was spoken with a good faith, and with a penitent heart, there was never man but he was heard.

* Matt. ix. 13.

† Ps. cxxx. 7.

‡ Ps. cxliii. 2.

But here is an addition, 'As we forgive them that trespass against us.' What meaneth this? Indeed it soundeth after these words, as though we might or should merit remission of our sins with our forgiving: as for an example; That man hath done unto me a bad turn, he hath wronged me; and at length he acknowledgeth his folly, and cometh to me, and desireth me to forgive him; I forgive him: Do I now, in forgiving my neighbour his sins which he hath done against me; do I, I say, deserve or merit at God's hand forgiveness of my own sins? No, no; God forbid: for if this should be so, then farewell Christ, it taketh him clean away, it diminisheth his honour, and it is very treason wrought against Christ. This hath been in times past taught openly in the pulpits, and in the schools, but it was very treason against Christ; for in him only, and in nothing else, neither in heaven nor earth, is our remission of sins; unto him only pertaineth this honour: for remission of sins, wherein consisteth everlasting life, is such a treasure, that passeth all mens doings: it must not be our merits that shall serve, but his; he is our comfort, he is the Majesty of God, and his blood-shedding it is that cleanseth us from our sins. Therefore, whoever is minded contrary unto this, he robbeth Christ of his majesty, and so casteth himself into everlasting danger. For though the works which we do be good outwardly, and God be pleased with them, yet they be not perfect; for we believe imperfectly, we love imperfectly, we suffer imperfectly, not as we ought to do; and so all things that we do, are done imperfectly. But our Saviour he hath so remedied the matter, and taken away our imperfections, that we be counted now before God most perfect and holy; not for our own sakes, but for his sake; and though we be not perfect, yet we be taken for perfect; and so we come to perfectness by him. So you see, as touching our salvation, we must not go to work to think to get everlasting life by our own doings; no, this were to deny Christ's salvation, and remission of sins, and his own free gift.—As touching our good works which we do, God will reward them in

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heaven,

heaven, but they cannot merit heaven : therefore let every man do well, for it shall be well rewarded ; but let them not think that they with their doings may merit heaven, for so doing is robbing of Christ.

What shall we learn now by this addition, where we say, ' As we forgive them that trespass against us ? ' I tell you, this addition is put unto it, not without great cause, even to be a certain and sure token unto us, whether we have the true faith in our hearts or no. For faith, the right faith, I say, consisteth not in the knowledge of histories, to believe the stories written in the New and Old Testament, that is not the lively faith, which bringeth salvation with it ; for the devil himself believeth them, and yet is and shall be damned world without end. Therefore we must have the right faith, the lively faith, the faith that bringeth salvation, which consisteth in believing that Christ died for my sins sake. With such a faith I draw him unto me, with all his benefits : I must not stand in generalities, as to believe that Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, but I must believe that that was done for my sake, to redeem with his passion my sins, and all theirs which believe and trust in him. If I believe so, then I shall not be deceived.

But this faith is a hard thing to be had, and many a man thinketh himself to have that faith, when he hath nothing less. Therefore I will tell you how you shall prove whether you have the right faith or no, lest you be deceived with a fancy of having faith, as many be. Therefore, prove thyself on this wise : There is no good man but is slandered or injured by one means or other, and it is commonly seen, that those which live most godly, have in this world the greatest rebukes ; they are slandered and backbitten ; and divers ways vexed of the wicked. Therefore thou, whosoever thou art, that sufferest such wrongs, either in thy goods and substance, or in thy name and fame, examine thyself, go into thy heart, and if thou canst find in thy heart to forgive all thy enemies whatsoever they have done against thee, then thou mayest be sure that thou art

one of the flock of God ; yet thou must beware, as I said before, that thou think not to go to heaven by such remitting of thy neighbour's ill-doings ; but by such forgiving, or not forgiving, thou shalt know whether thou hast faith or no. Therefore if we have a rebellious stomach, and a flinty heart against our neighbour, so that we are minded to avenge ourselves upon him, and so taking upon us God's office, which saith, ' Yield unto me the vengeance, and I shall recompense them ; ' * as I told you, we be not of the flock of Christ ; for it is written, ' Whosoever saith, I love God, and hateth his brother, that man or woman is a liar. ' † For it is impossible for me to love God and hate my neighbour. And our Saviour saith, ' If you will pray, forgive first, ' ‡ else it is to no purpose, you get nothing by your prayer. Likewise we see in the parable of that King which called his servants to make an account, and pay their debts, where he remitted one of them a great sum of money ; now that same fellow, whom the lord pardoned, went out and took one of his fellow-servants by the neck, and handled him most cruelly, saying, ' Give me my money. ' He had forgotten, it is like, that his lord had forgiven him. Now the other servants seeing his cruelty, came unto the King, and told him how that man had cruelly used his fellow : the lord called him again, and, after great rebukes, cast him in prison, there to lie till he had paid the last farthing. Upon that our Saviour saith, ' Thus will my heavenly Father also do with you, if ye forgive not every one his brother, even from your hearts. ' § Therefore let us take heed by that wicked servant which would not forgive his fellow-servant when he desired of him forgiveness, saying, ' Have patience with me, ' saith he, ' and I will pay thee all my debts. ' But we cannot say so unto God ; we must only call for pardon.

* Rom. xii. 19.

† John iv. 20.

‡ Matt. v. 23.

§ Ib. xviii. 23—35.

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There be many folk which when they be sick say, O that I might live but one year longer to make amends for my sins ! which saying is very naught and ungodly ; for we are not able to make amends for our sins ; only Christ, he is ' the Lamb of God which taketh away our sins.' Therefore when we be sick we should say, Lord God, thy will be done ; if I can do any thing to thy honour and glory, Lord suffer me to live longer, but thy will be done. As for satisfaction, we cannot do the least piece of it.

You have heard now, how we ought to be willing to forgive our neighbours their sins, which is a true token that we be the children of God ; to this our Saviour exhorteth us, saying, ' If thou offereest therefore thy gift upon the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath somewhat against thee, leave thy gift there before the altar, and go first and be reconciled unto thy brother.*' Leave it there, saith our Saviour, if thy brother have any thing against thee, go not about to sacrifice to me, but first and above all things go and reconcile thyself unto thy brother. On such wise St. Paul exhorteth us, saying, ' I would have men to pray without anger and carefulness.†' There be many wranglers and brawlers now-a-days, which do not well ; they may well know that they be not in the favour of God, God is displeased with them : let us therefore give ourselves to prayer, so that we may both love God and our neighbour. It is a very godly prayer to say, ' Lord, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.'

I have heard tell of some, which when they say this petition, they perceived that they asked of God forgiveness, like as they themselves forgive their neighbours ; and again, perceiving themselves so unapt to forgive their neighbour's fault, came to that point, that they would not say this prayer at all, but took our Lady's Psalter ‡

* Matt. v. 23, 24.

† I. Tim. ii. 8.

‡ A blasphemous form of devotion to the Virgin Mary.

in hand, and such fooleries, thinking they might then do unto their neighbour a foul turn with a better conscience, than if they should say this petition; for here they wish themselves the vengeance of God upon their own heads, if they bear grudge in their hearts, and say this petition. But if we will be right Christians, let us set aside all hatred and malice, let us live godly, and forgive our enemy; so that we may, from the bottom of our heart, say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, forgive us our trespasses.' There be some when they say 'forgive us our trespasses,' they think that God will forgive their guiltiness only, but not the pain; and therefore they believe they shall go into purgatory, and there to be cleansed of their sins; which thing is not so; and they be liars which teach such doctrine: for God forgiveth us both the pains and the guiltiness of sins; like as it appeareth in David when he repented, Nathan said unto him; 'The Lord hath taken away thy wickedness.'* But they will say, God took away the guiltiness of his sins, but not the pain; for he punished him afterward. Sir, you must understand that God punished him; but not to that end that he should make satisfaction and amends for his sins, but for a warning. God would give him a check, therefore he punished him. So likewise, whosoever is a repentant sinner, as David was, and believeth in Christ, he is clear, both from the pain and guiltiness of his sins; yet God punisheth sins, to make us to remember and beware of them.

Now to make an end: You have heard how needful it is for us to cry unto God for forgiveness of our sins; and you have heard, wherein forgiveness of our sins standeth, namely, in Christ, the Son of the living God. Again, I told you how you should come to Christ, namely, by faith, and faith cometh through the hearing of the word of God.

* II. Sam. xii. 13.

Now I shall desire you yet again to pray unto Almighty God, that he will send such weather, whereby the fruits of the field may increase, for we think we have need of rain. Let us therefore call upon him, which knoweth what is best for us; therefore say with me the Lord's prayer, as he himself hath taught us, 'Our Father, which art,' &c.

SERMON

S E R M O N XXII.

Being the seventh of those preached upon

T H E L O R D ' s P R A Y E R

M A T T H E W vi. 13.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

I N the petition before, wherein we say, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' there we fetch remedies for sins past; for we must needs have forgiveness, we cannot remedy the matter of ourselves, our sins must be remedied by pardon, by remission; other righteousness we have not, but forgiving of our unrighteousness, our goodness standeth in forgiving of our illness: but we see the guiltiness of the former sins turn again, when we do the same sins again. Seeing then that it is so dangerous a thing to fall into sin again, we had need to have some remedy, some help, that we might avoid sin, and not fall thereto again: therefore here followeth this petition, 'Lead us not into temptation.'

Here we have a remedy, here we desire God that he will preserve us from falling into sin. Our Saviour, that loving schoolmaster, knew whereof we had need, therefore he teacheth us to beg preservation of God, that we fall not; 'Lead us not into temptation;' that is to say, Lord God, lead us not into trial, for we shall soon be overcome, but preserve us, suffer us not to sin again, let us not fall, help us, that sin get not the victory over us.

And this is a necessary prayer ; for what is it that we can do ? Nothing at all but sin. And therefore we have need to pray unto God, that he will preserve and keep us in the right way ; for our enemy the devil is an unquiet spirit, ever lying in the way, seeking occasion how to bring us to ungodliness. Therefore it appeareth how much we have need of the help of God ; for the devil is an old enemy, hath learned all arts and cunning ; there is no subtilty but he knoweth it : like as an artificer that is cunning and expert in his craft, and knoweth how to go to work, how to do his business the readiest way ; so the devil knoweth all ways how to tempt us, and to give us an overthrow ; insomuch that we cannot begin or do any thing, but he is at our heels, and worketh some mischief, whether we be in prosperity or adversity, whether we be in health or sickness, life or death ; he knoweth how to use the same to his purpose.

As for example : When a man is rich, and of great substance ; he by and by setteth upon him with his crafts, intending to bring him to mischief ; and so he moveth him to despise and contemn God, to make riches his God. Yea, he can put such pride into the rich man's heart, that he thinketh himself able to bring all things to pass ; and so he beginneth to oppose his neighbour with his riches. But God by his holy word warneth us, and armeth us against such crafts and subtilties of the devil, saying, ' If riches come upon you, set not your hearts upon them. '* He commandeth us not to cast them away, but not to set our hearts upon them, as wicked men do : for to be rich is a gift of God, if riches be rightly used ; but the devil is so wily, he stirreth up rich mens' hearts to abuse them.

Again, when a man falleth into poverty, so that he lacketh things necessary and convenient for bodily life ; so the devil is ever ready at hand to take occasion by their poverty, to bring them to mischief : for he will move and stir up the heart of that man that is in po-

* Ps. lxii. 10.

erty, not to labour and call upon God, but rather to steal and rob ; notwithstanding God forbiddeth such sins in his laws ; or else at the least he will bring him to use deceit and falsehood with his neighbour ; intending that way to bring him into everlasting destruction,

Farther, when a man is in honour and dignity, and in great estimation, this serpent sleepeth not, but is ready to give him an overthrow. For though honour be good unto them which come lawfully by it, and though it be a gift of God, yet the devil will move that man's heart which hath honour, to abuse his honour ; for he will make him lofty, and high-minded, and fill his heart full of ambition, so that he will have a desire ever to come higher and higher : and all those which will withstand him, they shall be hated, or ill entreated at his hand ; and at length he shall be so poisoned with this ambition, that he shall forget all humanity and godliness, and consequently fall into the fearful hands of God.

If it cometh to pass that a man fall into open ignominy and shame, so that he shall be nothing regarded before the world ; then the devil is at hand, moving and stirring his heart to discontent, and at length to desperation.

If he be young and hearty, the devil will put in his heart, and say to him : What ? thou art in thy flower, man ; take thy pleasure ; make merry with thy companions ; remember the old proverb, ' Young faints, old devils : ' which proverb in very deed is naught and deceitful, and the devil's own invention, who would have parents negligent in bringing up their children in goodness ; he would rather see them to be brought up in wickedness, therefore he found out such a proverb, to make them careless of their children. But, as I said before, this proverb is naught, for look commonly where children are brought up in wickedness, they will be wicked all their lives after ; and therefore we may say thus, young devil, old devil ; young faint, old faint, ' The earthen pot will long favour of that liquor that is first put into it.' And here appeareth how the devil can

use the youth of a young man to his destruction, in exhorting him to follow the fond lusts of that age.

Likewise when a man cometh to age, that old serpent will not leave him, but he is ever stirring him from one wickedness to another, from one mischief to another; and commonly he moveth old folk to avarice and covetousness: for then old folk will commonly say, by the inspiration of the devil, Now it is time for me to lay up, to keep in store somewhat for me, that I may have wherewith to live when I shall be a cripple; and so under this colour they set all their hearts and minds only upon this world, forgetting their poor neighbour, which God would have relieved by them. But, as I told you before, this is the devil's invention and subtilty, which blindeth their eyes so, and withdraweth their hearts so far from God, that it is scarce possible for some to be brought back again: for they have set all their hearts and fancies in such wise upon their goods, that they cannot suffer any body to occupy their goods, nor they themselves to use them; to the verifying of this common sentence: 'The covetous man lacketh as well those things which he hath, as those things which he hath not.' So likewise when we be in health, the devil moveth us to all wickedness and naughtiness, to whoredom, theft, and other horrible faults, putting clean out of mind the remembrance of God and his judgements, insomuch that we forget that we shall die, and be judged.

Again, when we be in sickness, he goes about to move and stir us up to impatience and murmuring against God; or else he maketh our sins so horrible before us that we fall into desperation. And so it appeareth that there is nothing either so high or low, so great or so small, but the devil can use the self-same thing, as a weapon to fight against us with. Therefore our Saviour, knowing the craft and subtilties of our enemy, how he goeth about, without intermission, to seek our destruction, teacheth us here to cry unto God our heavenly Father for aid, for a subsidy against this strong and mighty enemy, against the

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'prince of this world;' as our Lord disdained not to call him;* for he knew his power and subtilty.

Here by this petition when we say, 'Lead us not into temptation;' we learn to know our own weakness and infirmity; namely, that we be not able of our own selves to withstand this great and mighty enemy the devil. Therefore here we resort to God, desiring him to help and defend us, whose power passeth the strength of the devil. So it appeareth that this is a most needful petition, for when the devil is busy about us, and moveth us to act against God, and his holy laws and commandments, we should ever have in remembrance whither to go, namely, to God, acknowledging our weakness, that we be not able to withstand the enemy. Therefore we ought always to say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven; lead us not into temptation.'

This petition, 'Lead us not into temptation,' the meaning of it is, Almighty God, we desire thy holy Majesty to stand by us, and with us, with thy Holy Spirit, so that temptation overcome us not, but that we, through thy goodness and help, may vanquish and get the victory over it; for it is not in our power to do it: thou, O God, must help us to strive and fight.

It is with this petition, 'Lead us not into temptation,' even as much as St. Paul saith, 'Let not sin reign in your corruptible body:† he doth not require that we shall have no sin, for that is impossible unto us; but he requireth that we be not servants unto sin, that we give not place unto it, that sin rule not in us. And this is a commandment; we are commanded to forsake and hate sin, so that it may have no power over us. Now we shall turn this commandment into a prayer, and desire of God that he will keep us, that he will not lead us into temptation; that is to say, that he will not suffer sin to have rule and government over us, and so we shall say with the prophet, 'Lord, rule and govern thou me in the right way.‡ And so we shall turn God's command-

* John xiv, 30.

† Rom, vi. 12,

‡ Ps. cxxxix, 24.

ment into a prayer, to desire of him help to do his will and pleasure; like as St. Augustine saith, 'Give that thou commandest, and then command what thou wilt.' As who would say, if thou wilt command only and not give, then we shall be lost, we shall perish.

Therefore we must desire him to rule and govern all our thoughts, words, acts, and deeds, so that no sins remain in us; we must require him to put his helping hand to us, that we may overcome temptation, and not temptation us. This I would have you to consider, that every morning when you rise from your bed, you would say these words with a faithful heart, and earnest mind: 'Lord, rule and govern me, order my ways so, that sin get not the victory over me, that sin rule me not, but let thy Holy Spirit inhabit my heart.' And especially when any man goeth about a dangerous business, let him ever say, 'Lord, rule thou me; keep me in thy custody.' So this is the first point, which you shall note in this petition, namely, to turn the commandment of God into a prayer. He commandeth us to leave sins, to avoid them, to hate them, to keep our heart clean from them; then let us turn his commandment into a prayer, and say, 'Lord, lead us not into temptation,' that is to say, Lord, keep us that the devil prevail not against us, that wickedness get not power over us.

Here you may observe who are those which love God, namely, they that fight against temptations, and assaults of the devil; for this life is a warfare, as Job saith, 'The life of man is but a warfare upon the earth: *' not that we should fight and quarrel one with another. No, not so, but we shall fight against the Jebusites that are within us. We may not fight one with another, to avenge ourselves, and to satisfy our anger, but we should fight against the ill motions which rise up in our hearts against the law of God. Therefore remember that our life is a warfare, let us be content to be tempted. There be some when they fall into temptations, they be so irk-

* Job vii, 1,

some that they give place, they will fight no more. Again, there be some so weary that they rid themselves out of this life: but this is not well done; they do not after St. James's mind, for he saith, 'Blessed is he that suffereth temptation,'* and taketh it patiently. Now, if he be blessed that suffereth temptation, then it followeth, that he that curseth and murmureth against God, being tempted, that that man is cursed in the sight of God, and so shall not enjoy everlasting life.

Farther, it is a necessary thing to be tempted, for how should we know whether we have the love of God in our hearts or no, except we be tried, except God tempt and prove us? Therefore the Prophet David saith, 'Lord prove me, and tempt me.'† This Prophet knew that to be tempted of God is a good thing; for temptations minister to us occasion to run to God, and to beg his help: therefore David was desirous to have something whereby he might exercise his faith; for there is nothing so dangerous in the world, as to be without trouble, without temptation; for look when we be best at ease, when all things go with us according to our will and pleasure, then we are commonly farthest off from God: for our nature is so feeble, that we cannot bear tranquillity, we forget God by-and-by; therefore we should say, 'Lord, prove me, and tempt me.'

I read once a story of a good bishop, who rode by the way, and was weary, being yet far off from any town; therefore seeing a great man's house, he went thither, and was very well and honourably received; there were great preparations made for him, and a great banquet, all things were in plenty. Then the man of the house set out his prosperity, and told the bishop what riches he had, in what honours and dignities he was, how many fair children he had, what a virtuous wife God had provided for him; so that he had no lack of any manner of

* James i. 12.

† Ps. cxxxix. 23. We read, 'try me,' but the words *tempt* and *try* were formerly used as exactly synonymous.

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thing; he had no troubles or vexations, neither inward nor outward. Now this holy man hearing the good estate of that man, called one of his servants, and commanded him to make ready the horses; for the bishop thought that God was not in that house, because there was no temptation there; he took his leave, and went his ways. Now when he came two or three miles off, he remembered his book which he had left behind him, he sent his man back again to fetch that book; and when the servant came again, the house was sunk, and all that was in it.

Here it appeareth, that it is a good thing to have temptation. This man thought himself happy, because all things went well with him; but he knew not St. James's lesson, 'Blessed is he that endureth temptation.' Let us therefore learn here not to be peevish when God layeth his cross upon us; let us not despair, but call upon him; let us think we be ordained unto it; for truly we shall never have done; we shall have one vexation or other, as long as we be in this world. But we have a great comfort, which is this, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength.'* If we mistrust God, then we make him a liar; for God will not suffer us to be tempted farther than we shall be able to bear; and again, he will reward us, we shall have everlasting life. If we consider this, and ponder it in our hearts, wherefore should we be troubled? Let every man when he is in trouble call upon God with a faithful and penitent heart: Lord, let me not be tempted farther than thou shalt make me able to bear. And this is the office of every christian man; and look for no better cheer as long as thou art in this world, but of troubles and vexations thou shalt have thy fill. And therefore our Saviour, being upon the mount Olivet, knowing what should come upon him, and how his disciples would forsake him, and mistrust him, taught them to fight against temptation; saying, 'Watch and pray:† As who should

* I. Cor. x. 13.

† Matt. xxvi. 41.

say, I tell you what you shall do, resort to God, seek comfort of him, call upon him in my name; and this shall be the way how to escape temptations without peril and loss. Now let us follow that rule which our Saviour giveth unto his disciples: Let us watch and pray, that is to say, let us be earnest and fervent in calling upon him, and in desiring his help; and, no doubt, he will order the matter so with us, that temptation shall not hurt us, but shall be rather a furtherance, and not an impediment to everlasting life. And this is our only remedy, to ask help at his hands. Let us therefore watch and pray, that no temptations may bear rule in us, or govern us, but that we may overcome all our enemies, yet not by our own power, but through God, who is able to defend us.

Truth it is that Almighty God tempteth to our advantage, to do us good withal; the devil tempteth to our everlasting destruction. God tempteth us for exercise sake, that we should not be slothful; therefore he proveth us diversly. We had need often to say this prayer, 'Lord, lead us not into temptation;' when we rise up in a morning, or whatsoever we do, when we feel the devil busy about us, we should call upon God.

The diligence of the devil should make us watchful, when we consider with what earnest mind he applieth to his business, for he sleepeth not, he slumbereth not, he mindeth his own business, he is careful, and mindful of his matters. To what end is he so diligent, seeking and searching like a hunter? Even to take us at advantage. St. Peter calleth him 'a roaring lion,'* whereby is expressed his power; for you know the lion is the prince of all other beasts. 'He goeth about;' here is his diligence; there is no power to be likened unto his power; yet our hope is in God; for, strong as he is, our hope is in God, he cannot hurt or slay us without the permission of God; therefore let us resort unto God, and desire him that he will enable us to fight against him.

* I. Peter v. 8.

Farther, his wiliness is expressed by this word, 'Serpent;' he is of a swift nature, he hath such compasses, such fetches, that he knoweth all things in the world. Again, consider how long he hath been a practitioner; you must consider what Satan is, what experience he hath, so that we are not able to match with him. O how fervently ought we to cry unto God, considering what danger and peril we be in; and not only for ourselves we ought to pray, but also for all others; for we ought to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Seeing then that we have such an enemy, resist, for so it is needful; withstand his motions; and this must be done at the first; for, as strong as he is, when he is resisted at the first, he is the weakest; but if we suffer him to come into our hearts, then he cannot be driven out without great labour and travail. As for example: there is a man that hath done me wrong, taken away my living, or hurt me of my good name; the devil stirreth me against him, to requite him, to do him another foul turn, to avenge myself upon him. Now when there riseth up bad motions in my heart, I must resist, I must strive, I must consider what God saith; 'Let me have the vengeance; I will punish him for his evil doings.'

In such wise we must fight with Satan; we must kill him with the sword of God, 'Withstand and resist.' Away then, Satan, thou movest me to that which God forbiddeth; God will defend me: I will not speak ill of my neighbour; I will do him no harm. So you must fight with him, and farther remember what St. Paul saith, 'If thy enemy be hungry, let him have meat:'* this is the shrewd turn that scripture alloweth us to do to our enemies; and so we shall 'cast hot coals upon his head,' which is a metaphorical speech: that ye may understand it, take an example; this man hath done harm unto thee, make him warm with thy benefits, bear patiently the injuries done unto thee by him, and relieve him in his necessities, then thou shalt heat him, for he is

* Rom. xii. 20.

in coldness of charity ; at the length he shall remember himself, and say, What a man am I ? This man hath ever been friendly and good unto me, he hath borne patiently all my wickedness, truly I am much bound unto him ; I will leave off my wrong doings, I will no more trouble him.

When I was in Cambridge, Master George Stafford read a lecture there, I heard him ; and in expounding the Epistle to the Romans, coming to that place where St. Paul saith, that ' We shall overcome our enemy with well-doing, and so heap up hot coals upon his head : ' now in expounding of that place, he brought in an example, saying, That he knew in London a rich merchant which had a very poor neighbour, yet for all his poverty he loved him very well, and lent him money at his need, and let him to come to his table whensoever he would. Now the rich man began to be a scripture man, he began to like the gospel ; the poor man was a Papist still. It chanced on a time, when the rich man talked of the gospel, sitting at his table, where he reprov'd Popery and such kind of things ; the poor man being then present, took a great displeasure against the rich man, insomuch that he would come no more to his house, he would borrow no more money of him, as he was wont to do beforetimes ; yea, and conceived such hatred and malice against him, that he went and accused him before the bishops. Now the rich man, not knowing any such displeasure, offered many times to talk with him, and to set him at quiet ; but it could not be, the poor man would not vouchsafe to speak with him ; yea, if he met the rich man in the street, he would go out of the way. One time it happened that he met him in so narrow a street that he could not avoid, but must needs come near him ; yet for all that, this poor man had such a stomach against the rich man, that he attempted to go forward, and not to speak with him. The rich man perceiving that, catched him by the hand, and asked him, saying, Neighbour, what is come into your heart, to take such displeasure against me ? What have I done against you ? Tell me,

and I will be ready at all times to make you amends. Finally, he spake so gently, so charitably, and so lovingly, that it wrought in the poor man's heart, that by-and-by he fell down upon his knees and asked him forgiveness. The rich man forgave him, and so took him again to his favour, and they loved as well as ever they did before. Many a one would have said, set him in the stocks, let him have the bread of affliction, and water of tribulation; but this man did not so. And here you see an example of the practice of God's word, in such sort, that the poor man, bearing great hatred and malice against the rich man, was brought, through the lenity and meekness of the rich man, from his error and wickedness, to the knowledge of God's word. I wish you would consider this example well, and follow it.

'Lead us not into temptation.' Certain it is, that customary sinners have but small temptations; for the devil letteth them alone, because they be fully his already, he hath them in bondage, they be his slaves. But when there is any good man abroad, that intendeth to leave sin and wickedness, and abhorreth the same, that man shall be tempted; the devil goeth about to use all means to destroy that man, and to stop his forwardness. Therefore all those which have such temptations, resort hither for aid and help, and withstand betimes; for I tell thee, if thou withstandest and fightest against him betimes, certainly thou shalt find him most weak; but if thou sufferest him to enter into thy heart, and hast a delight in his motions, then thou art undone, then he hath gotten the victory over thee. And here is to be noted, that the devil hath no farther power than God will allow him; the devil can go no farther than God permitteth him to do; which thing shall strengthen our faith, insomuch that we shall be sure to overcome him.

St. Paul, that excellent instrument of God, saith, 'They that go about to get riches, they shall fall into many temptations: '* in which words he teacheth us to

* 1. Tim. vi. 9.

beware; for when we go about to set our minds upon this world, upon riches, then the devil will have a fling at us. Therefore let us not set our hearts upon the riches of this world, but rather let us labour for our living; and then let us use prayer, and we may be certain of our living. Though we have not riches, yet a man may live without great riches; 'When we have meat, and drink, and cloathing, let us be content;'* let us not gape for riches, for I tell you it is a dangerous thing to have riches; and they that have riches, must make a great account for them; yea, and the most part of the rich men use their riches so naughtily, and so wickedly, that they shall not be able to make an account for them. And so you may perceive how the devil useth the good creatures of God, to our own destruction; for riches are good creatures of God, but you see daily how men abuse them, how they set their hearts upon them, forgetting God and their own salvation. Therefore, as I said before, let not this affection take place in your hearts, to be rich; labour for thy living, and pray to God, then he will send thee things necessary; and though he send thee not great riches, yet thou must be content withal, for it is better to have a sufficient living, than to have great riches. Therefore Solomon, that wise King, desired God that he would send him neither too much, nor too little; not too much, lest he should fall into proudness, and to despise God; nor too little, lest he should fall to stealing, and so transgress the law of God.

"But deliver us from evil." This word evil, many writers take it for the devil;† for the devil is the instrument of all ill; like as God is the fountain of all goodness, so the devil is the original root of all wickedness. Therefore when we say, 'deliver us from evil,' we mean, deliver us from the devil and all his crafts, subtillies, and inventions, wherewith he intendeth to hurt us: and we of our own selves know not what might let or stop

* 1. Tim. vi. 8.

† Ἀπο τοῦ πονηροῦ, 'From the evil one.' Doddridge.

us from everlasting life, therefore we desire him, that he will deliver us from all ill; that is to say, that he will send us nothing that might be a let or impediment to us, or keep us from everlasting felicity.

As for example; there be many which when they be sick, they desire of God to have their health, for they think if they might have their health they would do much good, they would live godly and uprightly. Now God sendeth them their health, but they by-and-by forget all their promises made unto God before, and fall into all kind of wickedness and horrible sins: so that it had been a thousand times better for them to have been sick still than to have their health; for when they were in sickness and affliction, they called upon God, they feared him; but now they care not for him, they despise and mock him. Now therefore lest any such thing should happen unto us, we desire him 'to deliver us from evil;' that is to say, to send us such things as may be a furtherance unto us, unto eternal felicity, and take away those things that might lead us from the same.

There be some which think it a gay thing to avoid poverty, to be in wealth, and to live pleasantly; yet sometimes we see, that such an easy life giveth us occasion to commit all wickedness, and so is an instrument of our damnation. Now therefore when we say this prayer, we require of God, that he will be our loving Father, and give us all such things which may be a furtherance to our salvation, and take away those things which may hinder us from the same.

Now you have heard the Lord's prayer, which is, as I told you, the abridgement of all other prayers, and the storehouse of God; for here we shall find all things necessary both for our souls and bodies; therefore I desire you most heartily to resort hither, to seek here what you lack; and no doubt you shall find things necessary for your wealth. In Matthew there be added these words, 'For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, world without end.' Amen. These words are added not without cause; for like as we say in the beginning,

'Our Father,' signifying that he will fulfil our requests, so at the end we conclude, saying, 'Thine is the power,' &c. signifying, that he is able to help us in our distresses, and grant our requests. And though these be great things, yet we need not to despair, but consider that he is Lord over heaven and earth, that he is able to do for us, and that he will do so, being our Father and our Lord, and King over all things.

Therefore let us often resort hither, and call upon him with this prayer, in Christ's name, for he loveth Christ, and all those which are in Christ; for thus he saith, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I have pleasure.'* Seeing then that God hath pleasure in him, he hath pleasure in the prayer that he hath made; and so when we say this prayer in his name, with a faithful, penitent heart, it is not possible but he will hear us, and grant our requests. And truly, it is the greatest comfort in the world to talk with God, and to call upon him, in this prayer that Christ himself hath taught us, for it taketh away the bitterness of all afflictions. Through prayer we receive the Holy Ghost, which strengtheneth and comforteth us at all times, in all trouble and peril.

'For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.' The kingdom of God is general throughout all the world; heaven and earth are under its dominion. As for other Kings, they are Kings indeed, but to God they be but deputies, but officers; he only is the right King, him only must and shall all creatures in heaven and earth obey, and kneel before his Majesty. Therefore have this ever in your hearts, what trouble and calamities soever shall fall upon you for God's word's sake; if you shall be put in prison, or lose your goods or lands, say always in your hearts, 'Lord God, thou only art ruler and governor,' thou only canst and will help and deliver us from all trouble, when it pleaseth thee; for thou art the King whom all things obey. For, as I said before, all the other Kings reign by him, and through him, as scripture

* Matt. iii. 17.

witnesseth; 'Through me Kings rule.' To say this prayer with a good faith and penitent heart, is 'A sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

Therefore let us at all times, without intermission, offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; that is to say, let us at all times call upon him, and glorify his name in all our livings; when we go to bed let us call upon him; when we rise, let us do likewise; also when we go to our meat and drink, let us not go unto it like swine and beasts, but let us remember God, and be thankful unto him for all his gifts. But above all things we must see that we have a penitent heart, else it is to no purpose; for it is written, 'God will not be praised of a wicked man.'* Therefore let us repent from the bottom of our hearts, let us forsake all wickedness, so that we may say this prayer to the honour of God, and our own benefit. And, as I told you before, we may say this prayer whole or by parts, according as we shall see occasion. For when we see God's name blasphemed, we may say, 'Our Father, hallowed be thy name:' when we see the devil rule, we may say, 'Our Father, thy kingdom come:' when we see the world inclined to wickedness, we may say, 'Our Father, thy will be done.' And when we lack necessary things, either for our bodies or souls, we may say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread.' And when I feel my sins to trouble and grieve me, then I may say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, forgive us our trespasses.'

Finally, when we would be preserved from all temptations, that they shall not have the victory over us, and that the devil shall not devour us, we may say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.' Amen.

* Ecclesiasticus xv. 9.

S E R M O N XXIII.

THE GOSPEL FEAST.

MATTHEW xxii. 2, 3.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain King, which married his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come.

THIS is a gospel that containeth very much matter; and there is another like unto this in the fourteenth of Luke,* but they be both one in effect, for they teach both one thing. And therefore I will take them both in and together, because they tend to one purpose. Matthew saith, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain King, which married his son.' Luke saith, 'A certain man ordained a great supper.' But there is no difference in the very substance of the matter, for they pertain to one purpose. Here is made mention of a feast-maker; therefore we must consider who was this feast-maker; secondly, who was his son; thirdly, we must consider to whom he was married; fourthly, who were they that called the guests; fifthly, who were the guests; and then we must know how the guest-callers behaved themselves; and lastly, how the guests behaved themselves towards them that called them. When all these circumstances be considered, we shall find much good matter covered and hid in this gospel.

Now that I may so handle these matters, that it may turn to the edification of your souls, and to the discharge

* Ver. 16—24.

of my office, I will most instantly desire you to lift up your hearts unto God; and desire his divine Majesty, in the name of his only-begotten Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, that he will give unto us his Holy Ghost; unto me, that I may speak the word of God, and teach you to understand the same; unto you, that you may hear it fruitfully, to the edification of your souls, so that you may be edified through it, and your lives reformed and amended, and that his honour and glory may increase daily amongst us. Wherefore I shall desire you to say with me, *'Our Father, &c.'*

DEARLY beloved in the Lord, the gospel that is read this day is a parable, a similitude, or comparison. For our Saviour compared the kingdom of God unto a man that made a marriage for his son. At a marriage you know there is commonly great feasting: now first you must know who was this feast-master, and that was God the Father. Luke the Evangelist calleth him a man, saying, 'A certain man ordained a great supper.' He calleth him a man, not that he was incarnate, or hath taken our flesh upon him; but only compareth him unto a man.

Who was he now that was married? Who was the bridegroom? Certainly, that was our Saviour Jesus Christ, the second person in the Deity, the eternal Son of God. Who should be his spouse? To whom was he married? His church and congregation: for he would have all the world to come unto him, and to be married unto him; but we see by daily experience, that the most part refuse this offer.

Now what manner of meat was prepared at this great feast? For ye know it is commonly seen, that at a marriage, the finest meat is prepared that can be gotten. What was the chiefest dish at this great banquet? What was the feast-dish? Marry it was the bridegroom himself; who offereth himself at his last supper which he had with his disciples, his body to be eaten, and his blood to be drunk: not as Astyages, King of the Medes, obliged Harpagus to eat his own son, whom he caused to be dressed

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and set before him ; and being asked by the King how he liked his meat, replied, Whatsoever pleaseth the King that pleaseth me : an example of vile flattery surely ! I fear me there be some in our day, also, who belie their consciences for the fear or favour of man. But Christ did not give his body to be eaten in this way, but spiritually, to our great comfort : so that whosoever eateth the mystical bread, and drinketh the mystical wine worthily, according to the ordinance of Christ, he receiveth surely the very body and blood of Christ spiritually, as it shall be most comfortable unto his soul. And to be short, whosoever believeth in Christ, putteth his hope, trust and confidence in him, he eateth and drinketh him ; for the spiritual eating is the right eating to everlasting life ; not the corporeal eating, as the Capernaumites* understood it. For that same corporeal eating, on which they set their minds, hath no blessing at all ; it is a spiritual meat that feedeth our souls. But I pray you, how much is the supper of Christ regarded amongst us, where he himself exhibited unto us his body and blood ? How, I say, is it regarded ? O Lord, how blind and dull are we to such things, which pertain to our salvation ! But, I pray you, wherefore was it ordained principally ? Answer, it was ordained to put us in mind of the great goodness of God, in redeeming us from everlasting death by the blood of our Saviour Christ ; yea, and to signify unto us, that his body and blood is our meat and drink for our souls, to feed them to everlasting life : but it is in a manner nothing regarded amongst us, we care not for it, we will not come unto it. How many be there, think you, that regard this supper of our Lord no more than a testoon ? Truly, I fear too many ; nay, I will prove that they regard it not so much : if there were a proclamation made in this town, that whosoever would come at the church at such an hour, and there go to the communion with the purate, should have a testoon ; when such a proclamation were made, I think, truly, all the town would come

* John vi. 52.

and celebrate the communion to get a testoon ; but will not come to receive the body and blood of Christ, the food and nourishment of their souls, to the strengthening of their faith ? Do they not more regard now a testoon than Christ ? But the cause which hindereth us from celebrating of the Lord's Supper, is this ; we have no mind or purpose to leave sin and wickedness, which maketh us not to come to this supper, because we be not ready nor meet to receive it. But I require you in God's behalf, leave your wickedness, that ye may receive it worthily according to his institution. Our Saviour Christ saith in the gospel of St. John, ' I am the living bread which ' came down from heaven.'* Therefore whosoever feedeth on our Saviour Christ, he shall not perish, death shall not prevail against him, his soul shall depart out of his body, yet death shall not get the victory over him : he shall not be damned. He that cometh to the marriage, to that banquet, death shall be unto him but an entrance, or a door to everlasting life. ' The bread that I will give ' is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' As many as will feed upon him, shall attain to everlasting life, they shall never die, they shall prevail against death, death shall not hurt them, because he hath lost all his strength. If we did consider this, no doubt we would be more desirous to come to the communion than we are ; we should not be so cold, we should be content to leave our wicked living, and come to the Lord's table.

Now ye have heard what shall be the chief dish at this marriage, namely, the body and blood of Christ. But now there be other dishes, or blessings in this feast, as remission of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which ruleth and governeth our hearts ; also the merits of Christ, which are made ours : for when we feed upon this dish worthily, then we shall have remission of our sins, we shall receive the Holy Ghost, and in the end, everlasting life. St. Paul saith, ' He which spared not his own Son, ' but gave him for us all, how shall he not with him give

* John vi. 51.

'us all things also?*' Therefore they that be in Christ, are partakers of all his merits and benefits, of everlasting life, and of all felicity. He that hath Christ, hath all things that are Christ's; he is our preservation from damnation, he is our comfort, he is our help, he is our remedy. When we feed upon him, then shall we have remission of our sins: the same remission of sins, is the greatest and most comfortable thing that can be in the world.

O what a comfortable thing is this, when Christ saith, 'Thy sins are forgiven unto thee.'† And this is a standing sentence, it was not spoken only to the same man, but it is a general proclamation unto us all; that is, to all and every one that believeth in him, that they shall have forgiveness of their sins. And this proclamation is cried out daily by his ministers and preachers; which proclamation is the word of grace, the word of comfort and consolation. For like as sin is the most fearful, and the most horrible thing in heaven and earth, so the most comfortable thing is the remedy against sin; which remedy is declared and offered unto us in this word of grace: and the power to distribute this remedy against sins he hath given unto his ministers; for now he speaketh by me, he calleth you to his wedding by me, being a poor man; yet he hath sent me to call you. And though he be the author of the word, yet he will have men to be called through his ministers to that word. Therefore let us give credit unto the minister when he speaketh God's word; yea, rather let us credit God when he speaketh by his ministers, and offereth us remission of our sins by his word. For there is no sin so great in this world, but it is pardonable, as long as we be in this world, and call for mercy; for here is the time of mercy, here we may come to forgiveness of our sins; but if we once die in our sins and wickedness, so that we be damned, let us not look for remission afterwards; for the state after this life is unchangeable: but as long as we be here, we may cry

* Rom. xiii. 32.

† Matt. ix. 2.

unto God for forgiveness of our sins; and then no doubt we shall obtain remission, if we call with all our heart upon him, for so he hath promised unto us in his most holy word.

You have heard now who is the maker of this feast or banquet; and again you have heard what meat is prepared for the guests, and what a costly dish the father hath ordained at the wedding of his son. But now ye know, that where be great dishes and delicate fare, there is commonly prepared certain sauces, which shall give men a great relish and appetite to their meats, as mustard, vinegar, and such-like sauces: so this feast, this costly dish, hath its sauces; but what be they? Marry, the cross, and affliction, tribulation, persecution, and all manner of miseries; for, like as sauces make the palate to relish meat, so affliction stirreth up in us a desire for Christ: for when we be in quietness we are not hungry, we care not for Christ; but when we be in tribulation, and cast in prison, then we have a desire to him, then we learn to call upon him; then we be hungry, and thirst after him; then we be desirous to feed upon him: as long as we be in health and prosperity, we care not for him; we be slothful, we have no stomach at all, and therefore these sauces are very necessary for us. There is a learned man which hath a saying that is most true: he saith, *Plus crux quam tranquillitas invitat ad Christum*; 'the cross and persecution bringeth us sooner to Christ, than prosperity and wealth.' Therefore St. Peter saith, 'Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.*' Look what God layeth upon you, bear it willingly and humbly.

But you will say, I pray you tell me what is my cross. Answer, this that God layeth upon you, that same is your cross; not that which you of your own wilfulness lay upon yourselves. As there was a certain sect which were called Flagellarii,† which scourged themselves with whips

* I. Pet. v. 6.

† Or Flagellantes. This sect first appeared at Peroufa in 1260, having for its author a hermit named Rainerus. They carried a cross

whips till the blood ran from their bodies ; this is a cross, but it was not a cross of God. No, no, he laid not that upon them ; they did it of their own head.

Therefore look what God layeth upon me, that same is my cross, which I ought to take in good part ; as when I fall into poverty, or into miseries, I ought to be content withal ; when my neighbour doth me wrong, taketh away my goods, robbeth me of my good name and fame, I should bear it willingly, considering that it is God's cross, and that nothing can be done against me without his permission. There falleth never a sparrow to the ground without his permission ; yea, not a hair falleth from our head without his will. Seeing then that there is nothing done without his will, I ought to bear this cross which he layeth upon me without murmuring or grudging.

But I pray you consider these words of St. Peter well, 'Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,' Here St. Peter signifieth unto us, that God is a mighty God, which can take away the cross from us when it seemeth to him good, yea, he can send patience in the midst of all trouble and miseries. St. Paul, that elect instrument of God, shewed a reason wherefore God layeth afflictions upon us, saying, 'We are chastened of the Lord, lest we should be condemned with the world :'* for you see by daily experience that the most part of wicked men are successful in this world ; they bear the sway, all things go after their minds, for God lets them have their pleasure here : and therefore this is a common saying, 'The more wicked, the more lucky ;' but they that appertain to God, they that shall inherit everlasting life, they must suffer here, according to the scripture, 'The judgement of God beginneth at the house of God.†

crosses in their hands, wore a cowl on their heads, and went naked to the waist. Twice a day, and once in the night, they lashed themselves with knotted cords stuck with points or pins, which gave occasion to their name. There are some remains of them in Italy to this day.

* I. Cor. xi. 32.

† I. Pet. iv. 17.

Therefore it comes of the goodnes of God, when we be put to taste the sauce of tribulation ; for he doeth it to a good end, namely, that we should not be condemned with this wicked world ; for these sauces are very good for us, they make us more hungry to come to Christ and feed upon him ; and truly when it goes well with us, we forget Christ, our hearts and minds are not upon him : therefore it is better to have affliction than to be in prosperity ; for there is a common saying, ' Vexation giveth understanding.' David, that excellent king and prophet, saith, ' It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast humbled me : '* but, I pray you, what sauce had David ? How was he humbled ? Truly thus, his own son defiled his daughter ; after that, Absalom, another of his sons, killed his own brother ; and this was not enough, but his own son rose up against him, and traiterously cast him out of his kingdom, and defiled his wives in the sight of the people. Was he not vexed ? Had he not sauces ? Yes, yes ; yet for all that he crieth not out against God ; he murmured not, but saith, ' Lord, it is good for me that thou hast humbled me, thou hast brought me low.'

Now you know at a great feast, when there is made a delicate dinner, at the end they have certain tarts, custards, sweet and delicate things ; so when we come to this dinner, to this wedding, and feed upon Christ, and take his sauces which he hath prepared for us, at the end comes the sweetmeat ; what is that ? The remission of sins, and everlasting life ; such joy that no tongue can express, nor heart can think ; which God hath prepared for all them that come to this dinner, and feed on his Son, and taste of his sauces. And this is the end of his banquet.

This banquet, or marriage dinner, was made at the very beginning of the world ; when God made this marriage in Paradise, and called the whole world unto it, saying, ' The seed of the woman shall vanquish the head

* Ps. cxix. 71.

‘of the serpent.’* Then was the first calling. And this calling stood unto the faithful in as good stead as it doth unto us, which have a most manifest calling. Afterwards, Almighty God called again with these words, speaking to Abraham; ‘I will be thy God, and thy seed’s after thee.’† Now what is it to be our God? Forsooth, to be our defender, our comforter, our deliverer, and helper. Who was Abraham’s seed? Even Christ the Son of God, he was Abraham’s seed; in him, and through him, all the world shall be blessed; all that believe in him, and all that come to this dinner, and feed upon him. After that, all the prophets, their only intent was to call the people to this wedding. Now after the time was expired which God had appointed, he said, ‘Come, all things are ready.’

But who are these callers? The first was John Baptist, which not only called with his mouth, but also shewed with his finger, that meat which God had prepared for the whole world; he saith, ‘Lo, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.’‡ Also Christ himself called, saying, ‘Come unto me, all ye that travail and labour, and I will refresh you.’§ Likewise the Apostles cried, and called all the whole world, as it is written, ‘Their sound is gone throughout all the world.’|| But, I pray you, what thanks had they for their calling, and for their labour? Verily this, John Baptist was beheaded, Christ was crucified, the Apostles were killed: this was their reward for their labours. So all the preachers shall have none other reward; for no doubt they must be sufferers, they must taste of these fauces: their office is, ‘To rebuke the world of sin;’ which no doubt is a thankless occupation.

There be many men which be not so cruel as to persecute or kill the preachers of God’s word, but when they be called to feed upon Christ, to come to this ban-

* Gen. iii. 15.

† Ib. xvii. 7.

‡ John i. 29.

§ Matt. xi. 28.

|| Rom. x. 18.

quet, to have their wicked living rebuked, then they begin to make their excuses; as it appeareth here in the gospel, where 'the first said, I have bought a farm, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused.' Another said, I have bought me five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.' Now when he cometh to the married man, he saith not, 'have me excused,' as the other said, but he only saith, 'I cannot come.' Where it is to be noted, that the affections of carnal concupiscence are the strongest above all other; for there be some men which set all their hearts upon voluptuousness, they regard nothing else, neither God nor his word; and therefore this married man saith, 'I cannot come,' because his affections are more strong and vehement than the other men's were: but what shall be their reward which refuse to come? The Father saith, 'I say unto you, that none of those men which are bidden shall taste of my supper.' With these words Christ our Saviour teacheth us, that all those that love worldly things better than God and his word, shall be shut out from his supper; that is to say, from everlasting joy and felicity: for it is a great matter to despise God's word, or the ministers of the same; for the office of preaching is the office of salvation. Here we learn not to despise the word of God, but highly to esteem it, and reverently to hear it; for the holy day is ordained and appointed to no other thing, but that we should on that day hear the word of God, and exercise ourselves in all godliness: but there be some which think that this day is ordained only for feasting, drinking, or gaming, or such foolishness; but they be most deceived; this day was appointed of God that we should hear his word, and learn his law, and so serve him; but I dare say, the devil hath on no days so much service as upon Sundays or holidays; which Sundays are appointed for preaching, and to hear God's most holy word: therefore God saith not only in his commandments that we shall abstain from working; but he saith, 'Thou shalt hallow it:' so that holiday keeping is nothing else but to ab-

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abstain from bad works, and to do better works ; that is, to come together, and celebrate the communion together, and to visit the sick people ; these are holiday-works ; and for that end God commanded us to abstain from bodily works, that we might be more meet and apt to do those works which he appointed unto us, namely, to feed our souls with his word, to remember his benefits, and to give him thanks, and to call upon him. So that the holy-day may be called a marriage-day, wherein we are married unto God ; which day is very needful to be kept. The foolish common people think it to be a belly-chear day, and so they make it a surfeiting day ; there is no wickedness, no rebellion, no lewdness, but hath most commonly its beginning upon the holiday.

We read a story in the fifteenth chapter of the book of Numbers,* that there was a fellow which gathered sticks upon the sabbath day, he was a despiser of God's ordinance and laws : like as they that now-a-days go about their business, when they should hear the word of God, and come to the house of prayer. Now Moses and the people consulted with the Lord, what they should do, how they should punish that fellow which had so transgressed the sabbath day : he shall die, saith God ; which thing is an example for us to take heed, that we transgress not the law of the sabbath day ; for though God punish us not immediately, as this man was punished ; yet he is the very self-same God that he was before, and will punish one day, either here, or else in the other world, where the punishment shall be everlasting. Likewise in the seventeenth chapter of the prophet Jeremiah,† God threatneth his fearful wrath and anger unto those which do profane his sabbath day. Again, he promiseth his favour and all prosperity to them that will keep the holy days ; saying, ' Princes and Kings shall go through the gates,' that is to say, Thou shalt be in prosperity, in wealth, and great estimation amongst thy neighbours.

* Ver. 32—36.

† Ver. 24—27.

Again, ' If ye will not keep my sabbath day, I will ' kindle a fire in your gates ; ' that is to say, I will destroy you, I will bring you to nought, and burn your cities with fire. These words pertain as well unto us at this time, as they pertained to them at that time ; for God hateth the disallowing of the sabbath as well now as then ; for he is and remaineth still the same God : he will have us to keep his sabbath, as well now as then ; for upon the sabbath day God's plough goeth ; that is to say, the ministry of his word is executed ; for the ministring of God's word is God's plough. Now upon the Sundays God sendeth his husbandmen to till ; he sendeth his callers, to call to the wedding, to bid the guests, that is, all the world, to come to that supper.

Therefore for the reverence of God consider these things, consider who calleth, namely God ; consider again who be the guests ; all ye. Therefore I call you in God's name, come to his supper, hallow the sabbath day ; that is, do your holiday-work, come to this supper ; for this day was appointed of God to the end that his word should be taught and heard : prefer not your own business therefore before the hearing of the word of God. Remember the story of that man which gathered sticks upon the holy day, and was put to death by the consent of God ; where God shewed himself not a cruel God, but he would give a warning to the whole world by that man, that all the world should keep holy the sabbath day.

The almighty ever-living God give us grace to live so in this miserable world, that we may at the end come to the great sabbath day, where there shall be everlasting joy and gladness. *Amen.*

SERMON

S E R M O N XXIV.

THE BEATITUDES.

MATTHEW V. 1, 2, 3.

When Jesus saw the people he went up into a mountain, and when he was set down, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, &c.

DEARLY beloved in our Saviour Christ, I have to tell you at this present time of a certain pilgrimage, which may be called the Christian man's pilgrimage, but ye shall not think that I speak of the popish pilgrimage, which we were wont to use in times past, in running hither and thither to Mr. John Shorn,* or to our Lady of Walsingham.† No, no; I will not speak of such fooleries, but I will speak of such a pilgrimage, which our Saviour Christ himself taught us, a spiritual pilgrimage, therefore whosoever will come to the eternal felicity, must go that pilgrimage, else we shall never attain thereunto.

‘When he saw the people, he opened his mouth, and taught them.’ Our Saviour did not only send out his apostles to preach and teach the people, but he also opened his own mouth, and taught the people his own self. Which act of our Saviour is to the reproach of

* This saint was also stiled Saint John of Ossulston, who was said to shut up the devil in a boot. Stow, p. 575.

† For in those days, whoever had not made a visit and an offering to the shrine of the Virgin Mary at Walsingham, was looked upon as impious and irreligious.

our Lordly Prelates, who in a manner disdain to preach themselves, in their own persons ; but think it to be enough to have two pertaining unto them, who preach in their dioceses ; they themselves being occupied in worldly business : our Saviour did not so, he opened his own mouth, and taught the people. Certainly this example of our Saviour ought more to be considered of our prelates than it is ; for they be not better than Christ was. Christ hath sent them, and given unto them a commission to preach ; wherefore disdain they then to open their mouths, and teach the people ? Seeing that our Saviour himself taught, how will they be excused when they shall make account for their doings ? What shall be their reward for their slothfulness ? No doubt, everlasting damnation.

Now our Saviour opening his mouth, what taught he them ? Forsooth, he taught them the Christian man's pilgrimage ; and this is a good and true pilgrimage that he taught : for this pilgrimage standeth not in running hither and thither. No, no ; there is a right pilgrimage, but there is somewhat so strange in it ; that if I should say it of my own head, you would not believe me, for it agreeth not with our natural wit ; therefore we must consider who speaketh it, and so captivate our reason and wit to the wisdom of God. Now Christ, the eternal Son of God, he teacheth us this pilgrimage ; of whom God the Father himself saith, ' This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear him.' Seeing then that the almighty God commandeth us to hear him, we ought not to disregard his doctrine, to esteem and value it for nothing, but most highly to esteem it as the infallible word of God. Now what saith he ? ' Blessed be the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' &c. I intend to be very short, else I could not have time to go through all things that pertain to this pilgrimage. This is a pilgrimage of eight miles, or of eight days journeyes ; all things that pertain unto it are comprehended in eight points.

I. Our

I. Our Saviour saith, 'Blessed are the poor;' this is contrary to our reason; for who would think poverty to be a blessedness? Who is he that would not rather be rich than poor? We esteem it to be a curse to be poor; but our Saviour saith, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.'

You must mark here that our Saviour when he saith, 'Blessed be the poor;' he counteth not the friar's wilful poverty; but if we come to poverty for confessing of Christ, then are we blessed. Again, when God sendeth poverty unto me, then I am blessed; when I take it well, without grudging.

And therefore he addeth 'in spirit;' that is, to take it in good part with a faithful heart, knowing that God sendeth the same unto us: let us take it with joy and gladness, for the blessings which Christ promised unto us here in his gospel, shall light upon us; therefore take it so, that poverty is a blessing, when it is taken with a faithful heart; else indeed it is to no purpose, except it proceed out of faith. Be not eager therefore to have riches; and when ye have them, when God sendeth them, set not too much by them. For Christ saith it is hard for a rich man to come to heaven; speaking of those which set their hearts upon riches; which men indeed be very idolaters; for they put their hope, trust, and confidence in them; so that whatsoever shall happen, they think they will escape, having money, and so they make money their God; which is a most wicked and abominable thing in the sight of the Lord. For God would have us to hang upon him, to trust in him, be we poor or rich; if we be rich, we should not set our hearts upon riches; if we be poor, we should comfort ourselves with this scripture, 'They that fear him shall not lack.'*

II. 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall have comfort.' We after our reasons esteem them happy that can make merry in this world; but our Saviour, contrariwise, pronounced them blessed that mourn and weep in this world. And therefore the scripture saith,

'It

* Ps. xxxiv. 10.

'It is better to go to the mourning house, than to the house of banquetting: '* for he that goeth to sick folks, it shall be a good admonition, it shall make him to consider the frailty and weakness of mankind, and so stir him up to make ready, and not to set much by this world. St. Paul speaketh of two manners of sorrowfulness, the one is worldly, and the other is spiritual; † the worldly sorrow is without faith; as the wicked, when they weep, they are sorrowful; yet this comfort, of which Christ speaketh, is not promised unto them.

It is a notable answer that Abraham maketh to the rich man when he lay in hell fire; 'My son,' saith he, 'thou hast received thy good days in thy life-time, now thou shalt be punished; but Lazarus hath had miseries and calamities; and therefore he shall be comforted now.' ‡ So we must learn to be content, to go from weeping to laughing, from sorrow to eternal felicity; but we must first suffer here, we may not go from one felicity to the other; therefore, St. Jerome saith, that 'He is a delicate soldier that will not suffer sometimes miseries and calamities.'

Therefore let us be content with it, let us bear them with a faithful heart, else we shall not attain to this comfort; for the miseries that the ungodly have, they work their own destruction, and everlasting perdition. For they cannot bear them as they ought to do; they murmur and cry out against God; but the godly, when he is in misery he taketh great profit by it, for misery drives him to leave sin and wickedness, and to repent that which he hath done against God. Here you may perceive now they that will have comfort at last must go on pilgrimage, in the road of affliction, and so at the end they shall have everlasting comfort.

III. 'Blessed be the meek, for they shall inherit the land.' This meekness is such a thing, that whosoever hath her can be quiet in all things: he that hath her will not avenge himself. But ye must know there be

* Eccles. vii. 2.

† II, Cor. vii, 10.

‡ Luke xvi. 25.

two manners of vengeance. There is a public vengeance, that is, the magistrates must see that wrong doers be punished, and rewarded according to their misbehaviours. But I may not avenge myself; for I am blessed when my goods are taken from me wrongfully, and I take it well. For Christ saith, 'They shall inherit the land:' he that for God's sake leaveth his land, or his goods, he shall inherit the land; so he shall with leaving the land, inherit the land: but what shall I do when my goods are taken from me? Answer, go to God's promises, which are, 'He shall receive it again an hundred fold.*' The public vengeance is committed unto magistrates. So that we may not avenge ourselves when any man doth us wrong. Yet, for all that, this taketh not away the liberty of the use of law; for a christian man may go to law, and seek remedy, yet we must take heed that we go not to avenge ourselves upon our neighbour with an evil heart; nor yet should we go with a covetous heart, to get ought of our neighbour; else it is lawful to use the law, when it is done with a charitable heart. As it is lawful for me being sick to go to the physician, without breach of my faith to Godward; but if I should go to the physician in despair of God, then this going were a wicked going. So I say, when we will go to law, we must beware that it be done charitably, not with a malicious mind; for whosoever seeketh to be avenged, he shall not be blessed of God. Again, whosoever suffereth wrong at his neighbour's hand, and taketh it willingly, he shall be blessed of God.

An example we have of Joseph; his brethren sold him, and handled him most cruelly and tyrannously; what did he? He took it willingly, without any revengement. What did God? Surely he fulfilled his promise, 'They shall inherit the land.' Therefore he made him Lord over all Egypt; this did God, and so he will do unto us.

* Matt. xix. 29.

'They shall inherit the land:' some expound the land for eternal life, but it may be understood of this world too: for they that be patient to bear and suffer, God will reward them here in this world, and yonder too. Now ye have heard what we shall have when we are meek-spirited; let us therefore set aside all stubbornness, all vengeance, hatred, and malice one against another, so that we may obtain that land which Christ himself hath promised us.

IV. 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.' These words may be understood thus, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst,' that is to say, that have so great a desire to righteousness, as a hungry man hath to his meat and drink. Now this desire being created in the heart by God himself, he will bestow the things desired, that is, he will give a righteous or holy disposition here, so that after death they shall awake up after his likeness, and be satisfied with the pleasures that flow at his right hand for ever.

V. 'Blessed be the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' You know which be the works of mercy. 'I was hungry,' saith Christ, 'I was naked,' &c.* There is a spiritual mercy, which is to admonish them that be in errors, to bring them to the right way. Also to forgive them that do me wrong, this is a mercy, and a needful mercy; and therefore they that will be cruel-hearted, so that they will not forgive unto their neighbours their faults, let them not look for mercy at God's hands. For we must be merciful, loving, and comfortable towards our neighbour, if we would obtain mercy at God's hands. But this seemeth now as though malefactors ought not to be put to death, because God requireth mercy. Sir, you must understand, that God requireth private mercy; so that private men shall one forgive unto the other: but it is another matter with magistrates; the King, and all other magistrates, are God's officers, they must do ac-

* Matt. xxv. 35.

according as God requireth them to do ; he saith, ' Thou shalt take away, thou shalt root out the ill,' them that be malefactors, ' from amongst the people, and shew not mercy unto them.'* So that magistrates ought to punish sin and wickedness, but private men ought to shew mercy one to another ; that is, he ought to forgive when any man hath done him harm, and so he shall have mercy at God's hands.

VI. ' Blessed be the clean of heart, for they shall see God.' By these words we may perceive that we shall not look to see God, to see our felicity, when we be impure of heart. We cannot come to that unspeakable joy and felicity which God hath prepared for his, except we be clean in our hearts ; therefore David, knowing that lesson, saith to God, ' O God, make clean my heart within me.'† But you will ask, how shall our hearts be purified and cleansed ? Answer, Through faith the hearts of men must be cleansed. They that hear God's word, and believe the same to be true, and live after it, their hearts shall be purified, and so they shall see God.

There be two manners of seeing God ; as long as we be here, we must see him by faith, by believing in him ; yonder we shall see him face to face, as he is ; therefore believe here, and see there. And so it appeareth, that he who will not hear God's word, and believe the same, that his heart may be cleansed, he shall not see God.

VII. ' Blessed be the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.' There is a law in Leviticus, where God saith, ' There shall not be a slanderer or whisperer amongst you, which are my people.'‡ But I tell you this law is not kept ; for there be a great many of those which speak fair with their tongues, as though they would creep into a man's bosom, but behind his back, or before other men, they betray him, they lie upon him, and do all they can to bring him out of estimation ; these whisperers be peace-breakers, and not peace-makers, for the devil bringeth his matters to pass

* Deut. xvii. 7.

† Pl. li. 10.

‡ Ch. xix. 16.

through such fellows; there be many such in England, which tell false tales of others to promote themselves withal; these be the children of the devil, and no doubt the devil hath many children in this world.

I will shew you an example: there was one Doeg, an Idumean, a servant of Saul the King, he was 'The master over the herdsmen;' when David, flying from Saul, came to the Priest Abimelech, very hungry and weary, and therefore desired some meat, the priest having none other bread but 'the holy bread, of that he gave David;' and after that he gave him the sword of Goliath, whom David had killed before.* Now this Doeg being there at that time, what doth he? Like a whisperer, he goes to Saul the King, and told him how the priest had refreshed David in his journey, and had given unto him the sword of Goliath. Saul hearing that, being in a great fury, sent for all the priests, and their wives, and their children, and slew them all.

This Doeg now, this whisperer, was not a peace-maker, but a peace-breaker, and therefore not a child of God, but of the devil. I could tell of some other Doegs, of other whisperers, for I have known some in my time, but all such are the children of the devil, they are not God's children; for Christ our Saviour called those God's children that are peace-makers, not them that cut their neighbour's throat. Seeing now that it is so good a thing to be a peace-maker, let all them that be in prosperity endeavour themselves to be peace-makers. But in matters of religion, we must take heed that we have not a peace which may withstand God and his word; for it is better to have no peace at all, than to have it with the loss of God's word.

In the time of the six articles, there was a bishop which ever cried Unity, unity; but he would have a Popish unity. St. Paul to the Corinthians saith, 'Be of one mind:' but he addeth, 'according to Jesus Christ; that is, according to God's holy word, else it were better

* I. Sam. xxi.

† I. Cor. i. 10.

war than peace ; we ought never to regard unity so much that we would or should forsake God's word for her sake. Therefore St. Hilary hath a pretty saying ; ' It is a goodly word, Peace ; and a fair thing, Unity ; but who doubts this to be the only right peace of the church, which peace is after Christ ; according to his words ? ' Therefore let us set by unity, let us be given to love and charity ; but so that it may stand with godliness : for peace ought not to be redeemed with loss of the truth ; that we would seek peace so much, that we should lose the truth of God's word.

VIII. ' Blessed be they that suffer persecution for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' This is the last journey, when we be demanded of our faith, and examined, and afterward be forced to believe as they will : when we come to that point, blessed are we when we suffer rather all extremities than forsake the truth, yea, we shall esteem it to be a great blessedness when we be in such trouble. And not only this, but whosoever suffereth any thing for any manner of righteousness sake, blessed is he.

' Blessed are ye when men speak ill of you ; rejoice, because your reward is in heaven.' Now ye have heard what is the way to heaven, what manner of pilgrimage we must go ; namely, first by spiritual poverty, by hungering and thirsting after righteousness, by meekness and lenity, by weeping and wailing, by pity and mercifulness ; we must have a clean heart, we must be peace-makers, we must suffer tribulation and affliction.

Then shall the end be, ' Your reward shall be great in heaven.' ' Reward,' this word soundeth as though we should merit somewhat by our own works, for reward and merit are correspondent, one followeth the other ; when I have merited, then I ought to have my reward. But we must not think so ; for we must understand that all our works are imperfect ; we cannot do them so perfectly as the law requireth, because of our flesh, which ever letteth us. Wherefore is the kingdom of God called then a reward ? Because it is merited by Christ ; for

as touching our salvation, and eternal life, it must be merited, but not by our own works, but only by the merits of our Saviour Christ: therefore believe in him, trust in him; it is he that hath merited heaven for us; yet for all that, every man shall be rewarded for his good works in everlasting life, but not with everlasting life; for it is written, 'Everlasting life is a gift of God.*' Therefore we should not esteem our works as though we could merit heaven by them; yet God hath such pleasure in the works which we do through his grace, that he promiseth to reward them with everlasting life.

Now to make an end: I desire you in God's behalf, remember this pilgrimage which I have taught you; set not light by it, for it is our Saviour's own doctrine, he with his own mouth taught us this pilgrimage. If we will now follow him, and do according as he teacheth us, then all these blessings, of which mention is made, shall light upon us, and in the end we shall obtain everlasting life; which God grant both you and me, through his only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

* Rom. vi. 23.

SERMON

S E R M O N XXV.

THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR.

Preached on the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity, 1552.

EPHESIANS VI. 10, 11, 12.

My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and, through the power of his might, put on all the armour of God, that ye may stand against all the assaults of the devil. For we wrestle not against blood and flesh, but against rule, against power, against worldly rulers, &c.

SAINT Paul, that elect instrument of God, taketh a muster of God's warriors, and teacheth Christian people to war, telling them plainly that they must be warriors; as it is written in the book of Job, 'The life of a man is a warfare upon the earth;'^{*} it is nothing but a continued battling and warring. Not very long ago I treated of a pilgrimage; I told you at that time of a very godly pilgrimage, and such a pilgrimage, which all saints whilst they were in this world walked: now here in this epistle St. Paul telleth us of a certain warfare; he taketh muster not only of the Ephesians, to whom this epistle is written, but also of us which be Christians; for all that is required of them is required of us. The first point that pertaineth to this warfare, is to be strong and hardy; and this is a commandment, as who should say, You that be Christians, that be baptised in his name, that look to be saved through Christ, I command you to be strong, ye may not be weaklings, for ye must fight hard; there is neither man nor woman but they must fight.

^{*} Job vii. 1.

But for all that St. Paul would not have us to stand in our own strength, to think to vanquish this mighty enemy by our own power or might: no, not so; for if we put our hope in our own strength, we shall soon be overcome; but we must put our hope, trust, and confidence in God, and trust through Christ our Saviour to overcome this enemy. We may not do as one Ajax did; whom his father sendeth forth with a company of men to warfare, giving him good and wholesome instructions that he should put his hope and trust in God at all times: Ajax answered his father; 'It is no great matter to get the victory with the help of God; yea, the fearfullest and weakest man can get victory when God helpeth him, but I will get the victory with mine own strength: without the help of God, I am able fight.' Such blasphemies spake this Ajax. But we shall not do so as he did, trusting in our own strength; for if we do, we shall lose the victory, to our eternal destruction. St. Paul saith, 'Be strong in the Lord;' therefore let us learn where we shall fetch our strength from, namely, from above, for we have it not of our own selves.

Now he saith, 'Put on all the armour of God.' You know that when a man goeth to war, and is harnessed all about, except one place, if his enemy seeth this bare place, he woundeth him even as though he had no harness at all: therefore St. Paul commandeth us, that we should have the whole armour, nothing lacking; for we may not go with pieces, having one thing, and lacking the other. Wherefore doth St. Paul require such strength, and such weapons, and teacheth us to fight, but to the end that we may subdue the devil, who is God's enemy and ours? Therefore St. Paul biddeth us to be strong, and armed round about; but not to put on our own harness, but the armour of God, which he hath appointed for us: therefore we must not learn of the devil to fight, he shall not teach us to battle; for it were like as if we should fight against the Scots,* and had no other

* In former times, before the Union, the English and Scots were almost continually at variance.

harness, but as they appointed unto us. No doubt if we were in that case, they would appoint such weapons for us, that they might get the victory, and give us an overthrow. So when we should fight against the devil, and had none other weapons but as he appointed unto us, no doubt he would soon give us an overthrow; for he would appoint weapons wherewith we could not overcome him and withstand his power.

Farther, the diligence of the devil is expressed and declared unto us by the mouth of St. Peter, which saith, 'He goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour:' he useth all crafts and deceits, he compasseth the matter hither and thither, till at length he bringeth his matters to pass; for he is no sluggard, no sleeper, nor negligent, but he applieth his matters and businesses to the uttermost. Therefore it is not in vain that St. Paul would have us hearty and strong, and to fight with a good courage.

Therefore it is ordained of God that we should have war, yea, a standing war, and not only for men, but also for women; for the women must battle and fight with this horrible enemy as well as men: and he is stronger than we be, when we are alone; so that we shall not be able to give him an overthrow. But if we have Christ with us, he is not able to hurt us either in our souls, bodies, or goods; that is, when we believe in Christ: for to have Christ with us is nothing else but to believe and trust in him, to seek aid and help by him, against our enemy the devil. Therefore Christ saith to all the faithful, to all those that believe in him, 'I am with you to the end of the world,' to assist you, to help you, to defend you, and to hear your prayers when ye call upon me; therefore, though we cannot withstand this enemy by our own power, yet with Christ's help we shall chase him, put him back, and make him ashamed of his enterprise and purpose.

When St. Paul saith, that we must fight against rulers, he describeth unto us the great power that the devil hath, for what is mightier than rulers and potentates?

Therefore to the intent that we might perceive his mighty power, he named him by that name, to that end to make us earnest to put on the armour, and take the weapons which God hath appointed for us, else we shall soon have an overthrow, if we will take such weapons as the devil shall appoint us, as he hath done in times past; for what a trust and confidence have we had in holy water, and holy bread; also in ringing of holy bells, and such fooleries? But it was good sport for the devil, he could laugh at our foolishness, yea, and order the matter so, to keep us in the same error: for we read in stories, that at some times the devil went away from some men, because of the holy water, as though that holy water had such strength and power that he could not abide it. O crafty devil! he went away, not for fear of the holy water, but because he would maintain men in error and foolishness: and no doubt it was the devil's teaching, the using of this holy water.

It was not long ago since I being with one of my neighbours that was sick, there came in an old woman, and when she saw the man sore sick, she asked whether there was no holy water to be gotten? See here the foolishness of the people, that in the time of the light of God's most holy word will follow such fancies and delusions of the devil. Ye know when there was a storm of fearful weather, then we rang the holy bells, they were they that must make all things well, they must drive away the devil; but I tell you, if the holy bells would serve against the devil, or that he might be put away through their sound, no doubt we would soon banish him out of all England; for I think if all the bells in England should be rung together at a certain hour, I think there would be almost no place, but some bells would be heard there; and so the devil should have no abiding place in England, if ringing of bells would serve: but it is not that that will serve against the devil; yet we have believed such fooleries in times past, but it was but mocking, it was the teaching of the devil himself. And no doubt

doubt we were in a miserable case when we learned of the devil to fight against the devil.

I was once called to one of my kinsfolk, who was very sick, and died immediately after my coming. Now there was an old cousin of mine, which after the man was dead, gave me a wax candle in my hand, and commanded me to make certain crosses over him that was dead, for she thought the devil should run away presently. Now I took the candle, but I could not cross him as she would have me to do, for I had never seen it before. Now she perceiving that I could not do it, with great anger took the candle out of my hand, saying, it is a pity that thy father spendeth so much money upon thee, and she took the candle, and crossed and blessed him, so that he was sure enough. No doubt she thought that the devil could have no power against him.

This, and such like things, were nothing but illusions of the devil; yet for all that we did so put our trust in them, that we thought we could not be saved without such things: but now let us give God most hearty thanks, that he hath delivered us from such snares and illusions of the devil, and let us endeavour ourselves most earnestly to hear God's most holy word, and live after it. Now to the armours; here is the armour of God's teaching, for man and woman.

When a man shall go to battle, commonly he hath a great girdle with an apron of mail going upon his knees; then he hath a breastplate; then for the nether part he hath high shoes; and then he must have a buckler, to keep off his enemy's strokes; then he must have a salad,* wherewith his head may be saved; and finally, he must have a sword to fight withal, and to hurt his enemy. These be the weapons that commonly men use when they go to war; in such wise St. Paul would have us to be prepared. Therefore whosoever will go to this spiritual war, and fight against the devil, he must have these weapons, truth and justice, and be ready to hear God's

* An old-fashioned head piece, or helmet.

word. These that be armed in this wise, the devil can do nothing against them; as it appeared in the holy man Job, whom the devil could not tempt farther than he had leave of God. Whereby we gather, that when we stand in God's armour, we shall be able to quench the assaults of this old serpent the devil.

Now the first point of this armour is truth and verity, from which truth the devil is fallen, he and all his company. For it is written, 'He abode not in the truth.'* And again, it is written of him, 'He is a liar, and the father of the same.'† O that all liars would consider what an horrible thing it is in the face of God to tell lies; they have a cause to be weary of their estate, for the devil is their father, and they be his children. And being children of the devil, he giveth them an ill reward as he doth to all his children, even everlasting perdition; for that is their inheritance, which they shall have of their father. 'When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he himself is nothing else but falsehood.' O there be many sure sentences in scripture against liars, and false tale-tellers. David said, 'Thou shalt destroy all them that speak lies.'‡ Therefore St. Paul exhorteth us to truth, and to leave lies, and falsehood; he saith, 'Set aside all lies, and speak the truth every one with his neighbour.'§

Now the second weapon is to be just, to give every man that which we owe unto him; to the King, that which pertaineth unto him; to our landlords what we owe unto them. Likewise between married folks there must be justice, that is to say, they must do the duties, the man must love his wife, and honour her; also the wife shall be obedient, and kind towards her husband. Farther, parents ought to do justice towards their children, to bring them up in godliness and virtue, to correct them when they do ill: likewise the children ought to be obedient unto their parents. Masters also ought to do justice unto their servants, to let them have their meat

* John viii. 44. † Ib. 42. ‡ Ps. v. 6. § Eph. iv. 25.

and drink, and their wages. Again, the servant ought to be diligent in his master's business, to do it truly, and not to be an eye-servant only. Finally, one neighbour ought to have justice with another; that is, to give him what pertaineth unto him, not to deceive him in any thing, but to love him, and to make much of him; when we do so, then are we sure we have the second part of this armour of God.

Thirdly, 'we must be shod,' we must have shoes; that is to say, we must have good affections to hear God's word, and we must be ready to make provision for the furtherance of the preaching of God's holy word, as far as we be able. Now all these that have such desires to God's word; also all those that are content to maintain the office of preaching, to find scholars to school, all these have their battling shoes, which St. Paul requireth of them.

Now when we be shod, we must have a buckler; that is, faith; and this must be a right faith, a faith according unto God's word; for the Turks have their faith, so likewise the Jews have their faith, also the false Christians have their faith; but they have not the right faith: not that faith of which St. Paul speaketh here, but they have a false faith, a deceivable faith; for it is not grounded on the word of God; therefore the right faith cannot be gotten, except by God's word. Now we may try ourselves whether we have this faith or not, if we lie in sin and wickedness, care not for God's word and his holy commandments, but live only according to our lusts and appetites, then we have not this faith; when we be slothful, when we be whoremongers, swearers, or unmerciful unto the poor, then we have not this faith, as long as we be in such customary sins. But if we hear God's word, believe and be content to live after it, leave our sins and iniquities, then we have that faith of which St. Paul speaketh here, then we shall be able to quench the fiery arrows of the devil.

So ye have heard what the armour of God is, namely, truth, justice, readiness to hear God's word, and faith; but

but this faith must not be only in our mouth, and our tongue, but in our hearts; that is to say, we must not only talk of the gospel, but also we must follow it in our conversations and livings.

Now then, we must have the helmet of salvation; that is, whatsoever we do, we must consider whether it may further or hinder us of our salvation; when it may hinder thee of thy salvation, leave it; when it may further thee, then do it: so throughout all our life we must have a respect, whether our doings may stand with our salvation or not.

When we are now ready armed round about, so that our enemy cannot hurt us, then we must have a sword in our hands to fight withal, and to overcome our ghostly enemy. What manner of sword is this? It is God's word; it is a spiritual sword, which all people ought to have. Here we hear that all men and women ought to have that sword that is the word of God, wherewith they may fight against the devil.

Now I pray you, how could the lay people have that sword, how could they fight with the devil, when all things were in Latin, so that they could not understand it? How needful it is therefore for every man to have God's word, it appeareth here, for only with the word of God we must fight against the devil. Let us therefore give God most hearty thanks that we have his word, and let us thankfully use the same, for only with God's word we shall avoid and chace the devil, and with nothing else. Our Saviour when he was tempted, what were his weapons wherewith he fought? Nothing else but even God's word: when the devil tempted, he ever said, 'It is written:'* when the devil would have him to cast himself down from the temple, he said unto him, 'It is written, Thou shalt not tempt thy Lord God:' that is to say, we may not put God to do any thing miraculously, when it may be done other ways.

* Matt. iv. 7.

As there is a common saying amongst us, 'Say the truth and shame the devil;' so every one, man and woman, must fight against the devil. But we preachers have the spiritual sword in a higher degree than the common people; we must rebuke other men, and spare no man; our office is, to teach every man the way to heaven; and whosoever will not follow, but live still in sin and wickedness, him ought we to strike, and not to spare. Like as St. John Baptist did, when he said to the great King Herod; 'Sir, it becometh not thee to do so.' So we that be preachers, must use God's word to the correction of other mens' sins; we may not be flatterers. Other people that have not this vocation, may exhort every one his neighbour, to leave their sins; but we have the sword, we are authorised to strike them with God's word.

Now the last part of this armour is prayer; and I warrant you it is not left out, for it is the Christian man's special weapon, wherewith to strike the devil, and vanquish his assaults; and if we be weak and feel ourselves not able to withstand our enemy, we must fall to prayer, which is a sure remedy, to desire God to help for his own sake, for Christ's sake, and for his promise sake; for he were not God, if he should not keep his promises. Therefore Christ commandeth us to pray always when we have need; and no doubt there never is a time but we have need, either for our own selves, or else for our neighbour; therefore we have need to pray, and we shall overcome the devil with faithful prayer; for prayer is the principal weapon wherewith we must fight against the devil.

I speak of faithful prayer, for in time past we took babbling for prayer, when it was nothing less; and therefore St. Paul addeth, 'In spirit.' We must pray in spirit, with a penitent heart; for there is no man that hath an ill conscience that doth pray in spirit; he that is an whoremonger, or a swearer, a carder, a dicer, a drunkard, or such like that prayeth, his prayer hath no effect; as long as he is in purpose of sin he cannot pray; and when

when he cannot pray, he is unarmed, he hath not these weapons of which St. Paul speaketh here ; but he that hath a penitent heart to leave his sins and wickedness, that same is he whose prayers shall be heard. And when we pray, we may not do it waveringly or rashly, without consideration, our mouth speaking, and our heart being occupied with other matters ; we may not do so, we must pray with great earnestness and ferventness.

At the last, when he hath set out the properties of prayers, then he saith, ' For all faints.' Here ye may consider, that when we know not scripture, how blind we be, and have been in times past. For we thought only those to be faints and holy that be gone out of this world, but it is not so ; all they that believe in our Saviour Christ, that call upon his name, and look to be saved by him, those same be God's faints. Yea, all faithful Christians that believe in him faithfully, are faints and holy.

Now when he had done, and set out all his mind, at last he cometh and desireth them to pray for him ; but for what ? Not to get a fat benefice or a bishoprick. No, no ; St. Paul was not a hunter for benefices ; he saith, ' Pray that I may have utterance and boldness to speak.' And this was requisite to his office ; for though a preacher be well learned, but yet lacketh that boldness, and is faint-hearted, truly he shall do but little good for all his learning ; when he feareth men more than God, he is nothing to be regarded.

Now I desire you most earnestly, set not light by prayer ; remember that it is the commandment of God, ' Call upon me in the day of trouble.'* And again, it is the only stay, ' The only help to come from God,'† and desire his help in Christ's name ; for by prayer, Peter being in prison was delivered. Likewise Moses by the efficacy of his prayer, went through the Red Sea, he and all his people. So was Hezekiah the King delivered from his sickness by his prayer. Also Elias the

* Pf. l. 15.

† Pf. cxxi. 2.

Prophet stopped the rain a long time, and then by prayers he brought rain again: if I should go through all the stories which shew us the efficacy of prayers, I should never have done, for no doubt faithful prayer faileth never, it hath ever remedied all matters.

Now ye have heard how that prayer is a commandment, we must in every distress pray unto God, saying, 'O Lord God, thou art merciful, thou knowest my weakness, which thou hast promised to help: therefore, for thy Son's sake, for thy mercies' sake, for thy goodness' sake, for thy truth's sake, help and deliver me out of my distress, and forgive me my sins.' Surely, whosoever prayeth thus earnestly, he shall be heard: but, 'We must pray at all times,' without intermission, when we go to bed, when we rise in the morning, when we go about our business, when we are on horseback, ever pray; for a short prayer is able to bring a great thing to pass, as it appeareth in the publican, which said only, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.' Therefore Christ saith, 'Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;'^{*} that is, lest ye be overcome with it.

Now remember what I have said unto you, and Almighty God, which ruleth heaven and earth with his infinite power, give us such strength, that we may be able to vanquish the devil and all his might. *Amen.*

^{*} Matt. xxvi. 41.

S E R M O N XXVI.

AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS.

Preached on the 23d Sunday after Trinity, 1552.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 17, 18.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and look on them which walk even so as ye have us for an example: For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

THESE are marvellous words of St. Paul, which seem outwardly to be arrogantly spoken; but ye must consider with whom he had to do, namely, with false apostles, which did corrupt God's most holy word, the gospel, which he had preached before. And so these false prophets did much harm, for a great number of people credited them, and followed their doctrine; which things grieved St. Paul very sore, therefore he admonished them, as who should say, Ye have preachers amongst you, I would not have you to follow them; follow, rather, me, and them that walk like as I do. This was not arrogantly spoken, but rather lovingly to keep them from error. He saith the same to the Corinthians, in the eleventh chapter, saying, 'Be ye followers of me;' but there he addeth, 'As I am the follower of Christ:' so put the same words together, and then all is well: for I tell you, it is a dangerous thing to follow men, and we are not bound to follow them, farther than they follow Christ: we ought not to live after any saint, not after

St.

St. Paul, nor Peter, nor after Mary the mother of Christ; to follow them, I say, universally, we are not bound so to do, for they did many things amiss. Therefore let us follow them as they follow Christ; for our Saviour giveth us a general rule and warning, saying, 'Whatsoever they teach you, do it; but after their own works do ye not;' and he addeth, 'Sitting in Moses's chair,'* that is to say, when they teach the truth: so that we ought to follow them that teach the truth; but when they do naught, we should not follow them; therefore he saith in another place, 'Except your righteousness be more than the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'†

This he speaketh of clergymen, giving us warning not to do as they did; we must have such a righteousness as may stand before God, we are not appointed to follow saints; as when I hear this saint hath prayed so many psalms, so many hours in a day, I am not bound in conscience to follow him, to be his ape, and to do as he did, my vocation being contrary unto it.

There is a place in the Second Book of Maccabees, ‡ where we read how Judas Maccabeus, that hearty captain, sent certain money to Jerusalem, to make a sacrifice for the dead. Now Judas did this; but it followeth not that we are bound in conscience to do the like, as the Papists conclude. For if Mary, the mother of Christ, should have done somewhat differing from God's word, we should not follow her, who indeed was not faultless, as St. Augustine saith, when she moved Christ to do a miracle when their wine was lacking at the marriage; when our Saviour answered her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' § As who should say, To do miracles is my Father's work, and he knoweth the time when they should be done; what have you to do with it? So likewise it appeareth in the Evangelist Matthew, where she, interrupting his sermon, desired to speak with him,

* Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

† Chap. xii.

‡ Ib. v. 20.

§ John ii. 14.

and one told him when he was teaching the people, saying, 'Thy mother is here, and would speak with thee;' he answered and said, 'Who is my mother, or sister, or brother?*' And stretched out his hand, saying, 'Whosoever doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my mother, sister, and brother.' Now in these places she hath shewed her frail nature; shall we go now and follow her? No, no, we may not do so. The apostle teacheth how we shall follow them, and in what things: 'It is good always to be fervent, and to follow in good things:† then it is not a good argument, such a man doth it, therefore it is a good thing. No, not so; we must follow so, and so do all things, as it may stand with our vocation whereunto God hath called us: for when we leave our vocation whereunto God hath appointed us, we do naught and damnably; as for example; Our Saviour fasted forty days and forty nights without any manner of sustenance, therefore should we do so too? no; because we are not able to do so too, for we should kill ourselves.—This I have said, to the end that ye might understand the words of St. Paul, where he saith, 'Be ye followers of me;' therefore I shewed you how far forth we ought to follow the example of the saints.

'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.' St. Paul speaketh of the false prophets, he saith, 'They walk:' by this word walk, is signified our conversation and living. For when we will signify any man to live wickedly, we may express it with these words; he walketh wickedly. Now if there were many in St. Paul's time which did walk wickedly, think ye the matter is any thing amended now at our time? I think, not at all; for we read in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation,‡ that Satan shall be let loose in the last days; that is to say, God will suffer him to exercise his crafts, his blasphemous wicked mind, which he beareth

* Matt. xii. 48—50.

† Gal. iv. 18.

‡ Ver. 3.

against God : and truly when a man considers the state of the whole world in every country, it appears no less but that the devil is loose; for, what rebellions, what cruelties, what covetousness, what hatred and malice is amongst men? Inasmuch that a man would think the whole world to be full of devils : therefore if there were many in St. Paul's time, it must needs follow that there be more now ; for now is the defection and swerving from the truth.

‘ Of which I have told you often, and now tell you ‘weeping.’ St. Paul was a good man, a hearty and an earnest man in God's cause ; he was a weeper, he went the pilgrimage whereof I told you the last Sunday ; it was a grief to him to see the dishonour of God amongst them which he had instructed in the word of God ; he was sorry to see the people blinded and seduced with false doctrine : but such things grieve not us ; though God be dishonoured, we care not for it ; but when have lost our goods, and sustain certain damages, then we can weep from the bottom of our hearts, and be most sorrowful ; but when we hear that God is dishonoured, that wickedness is committed, that grieveth us not, then we weep not : and so it appeareth most manifestly that we have not the heart of St. Paul, we are not so minded.

‘ Weeping ;’ it grieved St. Paul very sore that christian souls should be seduced through false religion : I could wish that there were such a fervent zeal now in us, as was in him then ; but it is not so ; we have no care for the souls of christian people ; and that appeareth most manifestly by unpreaching prelates : for if they had such an earnest mind to the flock of Christ, as St. Paul had, no doubt they would not be so lordly and slothful in doing of their duties.

‘ They are the enemies of the cross of Christ.’ A man may be an enemy of the cross of Christ two ways. All the papists in England, and especially the spiritual men, be the enemies of the cross of Christ two manner of ways :

First,

First, he that is a right papist, given unto monkery, I warrant you he is in this opinion, that with his own works he doth merit remission of his sins, and satisfieth the law through and by his own works; and so thinks himself to be saved everlastingly. This is the opinion of all papists; and this doctrine was taught in times past in schools and pulpits. Now all those that be in such an opinion, are the enemies of the cross of Christ, of his passion and bloodshedding; for they think in themselves Christ needed not to die, and so they despise his bitter passion, they do not consider our birth sin, and the corruption of our nature, nor yet do they know the quantity of our actual sins, how many times we fall into sin, or how much our own power is diminished, or what might and power the devil hath; they consider not these things, but think themselves able with their own works to enter into the kingdom of God. And therefore I tell you, this is the most perilous doctrine that can be devised: for all faithful and true christians believe only in his death; they long to be saved through his passion and bloodshedding; this is all their comfort: they must know, and steadfastly believe that Christ fulfilled the law; and that his fulfilling is theirs; so that they attribute unto Christ the getting and meriting of everlasting life. And so it followeth, that they which attribute the remission of sins, the getting of everlasting life unto themselves, or their works, that they deny Christ, they blaspheme and despise him. For what other cause did Christ come, but only to take away our sins by his passion, and so deliver us from the power of the devil? But these merit-mongers have so many good works, that they be able to sell them for money, and so to bring other men to heaven by buying of their good works; which, no doubt, is the greatest contempt of the passion of Christ that can be devised; for Christ only, and no man else, merited remission, justification, and eternal felicity, for as many as believe the same; they that will not believe it, shall not have it; for it is no more but believe and have. But to say or to believe that we should be saved by the law, this is a great dishonour-

dishonouring of Christ's passion; for the law serveth to another purpose, it bringeth us to the knowledge of our sins, and so to Christ; for when we be come through the law to the knowledge of our sins, when we perceive our filthiness, then are we ready to come to Christ, and fetch remission of our sins at his hands.

But the papists fetch the remission of their sins, not in the passion of Christ, but in their own doings; they think to come to heaven by their own works, which is naught. We must do good works, we must endeavour ourselves to live according to the commandments of God; yet, for all that, we must not trust in our doings; for though we do to the uttermost, yet it is all imperfect, when we examine them by the rigour of the law: but to trust in our good works, is nothing but a robbing of Christ of his glory and majesty; therefore it is not more necessary to do good works, than it is to beware how to esteem them.

Another denying of Christ is this mass-monging; for all those that be mass-mongers be deniers of Christ, which believe or trust in the sacrifice of the mass, and seek remission of their sins therein; for this opinion hath done very much harm, and brought innumerable souls to hell; for they believed the mass to be a sacrifice for the dead and living; and this opinion hath gotten all these abbies and chantries, almost the half of all England; and they would have gotten more if they had not been restrained by certain laws. For what would folks not do to ease themselves from the burden of their sins? But it was a false easement, a deceitful thing: therefore how much are we bound unto God which hath delivered us from this bondage, from this heavy yoke of popery, which would have thrust us to everlasting damnation. For now we know the way how we shall be delivered; we know that Christ is offered once for us, and that this one offering remedyeth all the sins of the whole world; for he was 'the lamb which was killed from the beginning of the world;' that is to say, all they that believed in him since Adam was created, they were saved by him.

Here

Here we may perceive that Christ hath many enemies in the whole world, he hath many that slander him, that diminish his glory; namely, all the papists that trust in their own merits, or seek remission of their sins by the sacrifice of the mass; all these now are enemies to the cross of Christ. Finally, all those that seek remission of their sins other ways than in the passion of Christ, they be traitors to God, and shall be damned world without end, unless they repent.

But here I must say something unto you, and I speak it to the satisfying of some of you; for I think there be many which reason very ill; they think it to be no matter though the curate be erroneous and naught in his doctrine; they care not for that; for they will say, I will hear him, and do according as he commandeth me to do; if he teach false doctrine, and lead me the wrong way, he shall make answer for me before God; his false doctrine shall do me no harm, though I follow the same.

This is a naughty reason, and contrary to Christ our Saviour's doctrine; for thus he saith; 'If the blind lead the blind, they shall fall both into the pit.'* Mark here, he saith not the leader shall fall into the pit, but they shall fall both, the leader and he that is led, the blind curate and his blind parishioners: and so it was in St. Paul's time, not only the leaders, the false teachers, went to the devil, but also they that followed their false doctrine. And therefore St. Paul is so earnest in admonishing them to beware and take heed of themselves; yea, with weeping eyes he desireth them to refuse the false prophets.

So likewise God himself giveth us warning in the Prophet Ezekiel; saying, 'If I say unto thee concerning the ungodly man, that he must die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest unto him, that he may turn from his evil way, and so live: then shall the same ungodly man die in his unrighteousness; but his blood will I require at thy hands. †

* Matt. xv. 14.

† Ezek. iii. 18.

In these places of scripture it appeareth most manifestly, that not only the naughty curate shall go to the devil, but also all those that follow his naughty doctrine. The wicked shall die in his wickedness; for though God do require the blood of the parishioners at the curate's hands, yet for all that they shall be damned in the mean season.

But I pray you be not offended with me, when I tell you one thing many times; for I do it to that end that ye may perceive what danger it is to have an ill curate; this maketh me to put you many times in remembrance of it.

I will tell you now a story of a friar, to refresh you withal: There was a gray friar, who preached many times, and had but one sermon to preach, which sermon was of the ten commandments; and because this friar had preached this sermon so often, one that heard it before, told the friar's servant that his master was called, Friar John Ten-Commandments. Wherefore the servant shewed the friar his master thereof, and advised him to preach of some other matters; for it grieved the servant to hear his master derided. Now the friar made answer, saying, 'Belike then thou knowest the ten commandments well, seeing thou hast heard them so many times:' Yea, said the servant, I warrant you? Let me hear them, saith the master: then he began, Pride, Covetousness, Lewdness, and so numbered the deadly sins for the ten commandments.

And so there be many at this time, which be weary of the old gospel, they would fain hear some new things; they think themselves so perfect in the old, when they be no more skilful than this servant was in his ten commandments.

Here I must answer an objection, or doubt, that peradventure some of you may make, you will think when you hear what is the nature of false doctrine, ye will think, I say; Alas! what is done with our grandfathers, no doubt they are lost everlastingly, if this doctrine be true; for, after your saying, they have had the false

doctrine, therefore they be damned; for the nature of false doctrine is to condemn. Such doubts some will make, yea, and there be some which in no wise will receive the gospel, and that only for this opinion's sake; for they think that if they should receive the gospel, it were even as much as to think their forefathers be damned.

Now to this objection, I will make answer; it is with false doctrine like as it is with fire; the nature of fire is to burn and consume all that which is laid in it that may be burned. So the nature of false doctrine is to condemn, to bring to everlasting damnation; that is the nature of false doctrine. But yet for all that, though the nature of fire be to burn and consume all things, yet there hath been many things in the fire which have not been burned nor consumed, as the bush which appeared unto Moses, it burned in the fire, and yet it was not consumed: what was the cause? The power of God. So the three men whom Nebuchadnezzar cast into the furnace of fire were not consumed with the same; for not a hair of their head perished, but rather the fire brake out and consumed those that put them in the oven; for though the fire by its nature would have consumed them, yet, through the power of God, the strength of the fire was vanquished, and the men were preserved from it.

Even so is it with popery, and with false doctrine, the nature of it is to consume, to corrupt and bring to everlasting sorrow; yet let us hope that our forefathers were not damned, for God hath many ways to preserve them from perishing; yea, in the last hour of death God can work with his Holy Ghost, and teach them to know Christ his Son for their Saviour, though they were taught otherwise before, yet God can preserve them from the poison of the false doctrine.

At the time when Ahab, that wicked King, and his wife Jezebel, more wicked than her husband, when they had the rule, they abolished the word of God clean, and set up false doctrine; killing the true prophets of God; insomuch that Elias saith unto God, with crying and
great

great lamentations ; ‘ Lord, the children of Israel have
 ‘ forsaken thy covenant, broken down thine altars, and
 ‘ slain thy prophets with the sword ; And I only am left,
 ‘ and they seek my life to take it away.’* Here it ap-
 peareth that the pulpits at that time were occupied with
 false teachers, with false religion, like as it was in the
 time of our forefathers ; infomuch that Elias cried out
 and said plainly, that there were left no more but he only.
 But what saith God ? ‘ I have left me seven thousand
 ‘ which have not bowed their knees unto Baal.’ Now
 like as God could preserve a great number of the Israelites
 at the same time, so he could preserve our forefathers
 from the poison of popery, which was taught at that
 time ; ‘ For the Lord knoweth which are his.’† Also
 Christ himself saith ; ‘ No man shall take those from me
 ‘ which my Father hath given to me ;’‡ that is to say,
 which are ordained to everlasting life.

But now ye will say, seeing then that God can save
 men, and bring them to everlasting life, without the out-
 ward hearing of the word of God, then we have no need
 to hear the word of God, we need not to have preachers
 amongst us. For like as he hath preserved them, so he
 will preserve us too, without the hearing of God’s word.

This is a foolish reason ; I will answer you thus :
 God can and is able to preserve things from fire, so that
 they shall not burn or consume, and therefore I go and
 set my house on fire, and it shall be preserved : or thus,
 God preserved these three men from fire, and so that they
 took no harm ; therefore I will go and cast myself into
 the fire, and I shall take no harm : is this now a good
 reason ? No, no ; for these three men had their vocation
 to go into the fire, they were cast in by violence ; so if
 God will have thee to go into the fire by violence for his
 word’s sake, then go with a good will, and no doubt he
 will either preserve thee as he did them, or else he will
 take thee out of this miserable life, to everlasting felicity ;
 but to cast myself into the fire without any calling, I

* I. Kings xviii.

† II. Tim. ii. 46.

‡ John x. 28.

may not; for it is written, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'*

So likewise in our time, God hath sent light into the world, he hath opened the gates of heaven unto us by his word; which word he opened unto us by his preachers; shall we now despise the preachers? Shall we refuse to hear God's word, to learn the way to heaven, and require him to save us without his word? No, no; for when we do so, we tempt God, and shall be damned world without end.

Thus much have I thought good to say against the suggestions of the devil, when he putteth thee in mind, saying, Thy forefathers are damned: that thou mightest learn not to despair of their salvation, and yet be not too careful; for they have their part, we must not make an account for their doings, every one must make answer for himself; for if they be damned, they cannot be brought again with our sorrowfulness; let us rather endeavour ourselves to hear God's word diligently, and learn the way of salvation, so that when we shall be called, we may be sure of it.

Now these false preachers of which St. Paul speaketh here, are enemies unto the cross of Christ. What shall be their end? Even perdition, destruction, and everlasting damnation, whose god is their belly. The false preachers preach only pleasant things, and so to get great rewards; and are able to live wealthily in this world, and to make good cheer. I fear me there be many of these belly-gods in the world, which preach pleasant things to get riches, to go gay, and trick up themselves; they care for no more, they study and do what they can to buckle the gospel and the world together; to set God and the devil at one table; they be gospellers no longer than till they can get riches; when they have that that they seek for, they care for no more, then the gospel is gone quite out of their hearts, and their glory is to their shame; it is a short glory and a long shame that they

* Matt. iv. 7.

shall have ; for in the other world, all the world shall laugh upon them to their shame, which are worldly-minded. Is there not more that be worldly-minded than that be godly-minded ? I think St. Paul spake these words of the clergymen, that will take upon them the spiritual office of preaching, and yet meddle in worldly matters too, contrary to their calling. The clergy of our time have procured unto themselves a liberty to purchase lands. Think ye not that such doings favour somewhat of worldly things ? But I will desire them to take heed ; for St. Paul saith here, that all they that be worldly-minded, are enemies of the cross of Christ ; for they make their bellies their god. Therefore they shall receive their punishment for their wicked doings ; what shall that be ? Verily the pain of hell-fire world without end, without any deliverance from the same ; this is their reward.

But St. Paul and every true preacher's ' conversation is ' in heaven : '* that is, conformable unto God's heavenly will : and no doubt our Saviour Jesus Christ will come, very shortly, and will take account of every one of us ; therefore let us never forget this day which we call doom's-day. St. Jerom saith, that he ever thought he heard the trumpet. Now they that have in consideration this day, and make themselves ready, it is a joyful thing unto them ; but such as are customary sinners, as common swearers, adulterers, or idolaters, and such as do credit popery, unto them this day shall be a fearful day, it shall be a heavy coming unto them.

' Now St. Paul saith, that he looketh for this Saviour which shall change our vile bodies according to the working, whereby he is able also to subdue all things unto himself.' We have a frail body, mortal, subject to all infirmities and miseries ; it is a gross body, but for all that it shall rise again, and shall be changed. It is mortal now, it shall be immortal then ; it is passible now, it shall be impassible then ; it is gross now, it shall be turned to agility then ; it is corrupt now, it shall

* Phil. iii. 20.

be uncorrupt then ; it is ignominious now, it shall be glorious then, like unto his body. Now if it shall be so with our bodies, ye may be sure that it shall be so with our souls too ; for that felicity that we shall have, that God hath laid up for us, passeth all mens' thoughts ; what joy they shall have that be content to leave their sins, and live godly. And these things Christ our Saviour shall bring to pass by his infinite power.

But how shall it go with the other which will not hear God's word, nor leave their wickedness ? Truly, ' Their worm shall not die.'* By these words of Christ, is expressed the great pain and sorrow that the wicked shall have ; therefore, death to sinners is the worst thing that can happen unto them. They that have pleasure here, and live according to their desires, they shall come to afflictions in the other world. Again, they that have afflictions here, shall in the other world have the perpetual sabbath, where there is no manner of miseries, but a continual lauding and praising of God ; to whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and ever, world without end. *Amen.*

* Mark ix. 44.

SERMON

S E R M O N XXVII.

CHRIST THE BEST PHYSICIAN.

MATTHEW ix. 18—26.

While he spake unto them this, behold there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now at the point of death, but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples: and behold, a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment, &c.

THIS is a notable story, and much comfort we shall find in it, if we shall consider and weigh it, with all the circumstances. The Evangelist Mark * saith, the ruler's name was Jairus, he was an officer; some think that he was a reader of the scripture, as there were at that time; or perchance he was such an officer as we call a churchwarden. For though the Jews had a law, that they should make no sacrifices any where but at Jerusalem, where the temple was, and all the ceremonies, yet for all that, they had in every town their churches or synagogues, like as we have churches here in England, commonly every town hath a church.

Now our Saviour coming to Capernaum, where that great man dwelt, Jairus cometh unto him in all haste, and falleth down before him, 'and maketh great suit unto him, that he would come unto his house and heal

* Ch. v. 22.

his daughter, who was sick. No doubt he had heard what manner of man our Saviour was, and wherefore he was come into this world; namely, to save sinners both in soul and body; and he had heard also the general proclamation, written in the eleventh chapter of Matthew, where our Saviour saith, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will ease you.'

This proclamation that Jairus had heard, he believed; and therefore he cometh to Christ; he believeth that Christ is able to help him, and according unto his belief it happeneth unto him: for if this Jairus had not had a good faith, he would not have humbled himself so much to fall down before such a poor man as our Saviour was.

Now ye shall learn of this Jairus, first by his example to go to Christ, in all distresses to seek help by him; and also ye shall mark and observe his great and fatherly love that he hath towards his daughter; for he maketh great suit to Christ for her, which signifieth that he had a great and earnest love towards her. This same fatherly affection and love of the parents towards their children is the good gift of God; and God hath planted the same in their hearts; and this especially for two respects: First, for the childrens sake; for it is an irksome thing to bring up children; and not only that, but also it is a chargeable thing to keep them, and to wait upon them, and preserve them from all peril: if God had not planted such love in the parents hearts, indeed it were impossible to do so much for them. Another cause wherefore God hath planted such love in the parents hearts towards their children is, that we might learn by it, what affections he beareth towards us. For though the love of parents towards their children is very great, yet the love of God towards us is greater; yea, his love towards us surpasseth far all fatherly love which they have towards their children: and this appeareth by that he hath given his natural Son (the highest treasure that ever he had in heaven or in earth) for us, even unto the death, in his bitter passion.

Now

Now to the matter: This Jairus is a good and loving father towards his child, he cometh and desireth help of Christ, that his daughter may be healed. Therefore by this Jairus we may learn to have a good faith towards God, and a right natural love towards our children. But it is a comfortable thing to consider this fatherly affection of God towards us; if we would well consider the same, it would stir up a childly love in our hearts towards him, so that we would be content to be ordered by him, and ruled according to his pleasure; like as a good and godly child is content to be ruled by his father and mother, and will in no wise do against them; so we should be obedient unto God, like as the child is unto his parents.

Now cometh another matter: For as our Saviour was going to the house where this young man lay sick, there cometh a good faithful woman pressing through the people, desirous to touch his garment. The Evangelist Mark setteth out this story more plainly than Matthew doth; for he saith, 'There was a certain woman which had been diseased of an issue twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and felt no amendment at all, but rather was worse and worse. When she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press of the people behind him, and touched his garment; for she said, if I only may touch the hem of his cloaths I shall be made whole.'* This woman was sick of a sore and grievous disease, and had been sick of it twelve years, she had suffered much sorrow by it. And no doubt whosoever hath to do with a physician, he must be a sufferer; it is a chargeable and painful thing to be physicked; a man must receive many bitter medicines and potions. Therefore Mark saith, 'She suffered much; they had put her to great pain, and she had bestowed all her substance upon them, and was never the better, but rather the worse.' This place of scripture reproveth not physicians, as though physic were a superfluous thing; for that which was said to Hezekiah,

* Mark v. 25, &c.

when he was sick, 'Take a lump of figs,' &c.* is a proof, that it is lawful to use phyfic.

But now, in our days, phyfic is a remedy prepared only for rich folks, and not for poor, for the poor man is not able to pay the physician. God indeed hath made phyfic for both rich and poor; but the physicians in our time seek only their own profits, how to get money, not how they might do good unto their poor neighbour. Whereby it appeareth, that they be, for the most part, without charity; and so, consequently, not the children of God; and, no doubt, but the heavy judgement of God hangeth over their heads; for they are commonly very wealthy, and ready to purchase lands, but to help their neighbour, that they cannot do; but God will find them out one day, I doubt not.

We must beware when we use phyfic, that we trust not too much to physicians, and forget God in the mean season. Like as King Aſa did, who had a diſeaſe in his feet, and is much reproved, becauſe 'In his ſickneſs he ſought not the Lord, but phyſicians.'† I knew once a rich covetous man who travelled to London, where, as ſtout as he was, he fell ſick; and, in his ſickneſs, when he was exhorted to bear it well, and ſubmit himſelf unto God, he cried out with horrible ſwearings, 'Shall I die? Shall I die? Phyſicians! Phyſicians! call Phyſicians!' As well as he loved his gold, which was his god, yet he could find in his heart to ſpend upon phyſicians; but in the end he died like a beaſt, without any repentance. This man now abuſed the phyſicians. We may uſe God's proviſions and remedies which he hath left us, but yet for all that we may not truſt in them.

Now to the purpoſe: 'This woman had ſpent all her gold, and was never the better.' Well, what the phyſicians could not do, Chriſt our Saviour did for her, and on this wiſe: There was a great multitude of people about Chriſt, they preſſed upon him; now the woman cometh, amongſt the preſs of the people, to him, deſir-

* II. Kings xx. 7.

† II. Chron. xvi. 12.

ing to touch only the hem of his garment, for she believed that she should be found as soon as she might touch him; which came so to pass as she believed: for as soon as she had touched him, her issue was stopped, and her sickness gone quite and clean. She was a shamefaced woman; she was not so bold as to speak to our Saviour, but she cometh behind his back, and stealeth, as it were, her health.

But what doth our Saviour? He would not suffer her to be hid, but saith to his disciples, 'Who hath touched my cloaths?' His disciples made answer, 'Thou seest the people thrust thee, and askest thou, who touched me?' And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done within her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 'I perceive,' saith Christ, 'that virtue is gone out of me.' He saith not, my cloak, or my vestment, hath done a work; but he saith, 'I know virtue is gone out of me.' Therefore we may not be so foolish to think that our Saviour's hem made the woman whole, but rather her good faith and trust which she had in our Saviour.

We must not do as the foolish blind papists do, which impute great holiness unto the vestment of our Saviour; for we see that this woman was made whole by Christ, and through him, by his divine power. And so is verified this scripture, which saith, 'That which is impossible unto man, is possible unto God.'* Physicians had despaired of that woman, it surpassed their art to help her; but our Saviour declared his divine power, and healed her out of hand, she doing nothing but touching the hem of his vestment. So can God help, when men cannot.

By this example we may learn to put our hope and trust in God in all manner of troubles, like as this woman did hers; she believed in our Saviour, and therefore she was healed. All England, yea all the world, may take

* Matt. xix. 26.

this woman for a school-mistress, to learn by her to trust in Christ, and to seek help at his hands.

Again, by this woman you may learn, that God sometimes brings some low, and humbles them that he might promote them, and to bring them aloft; as in this woman, she was sick for twelve years, and vexed with a grievous sickness; but at length she was healed, and not only that, but also exalted, for Christ called her his daughter, which was the greatest promotion that could be. So likewise Joseph was in great misery, sold into Egypt, and afterward cast into prison, where he lay a great while; he was greatly humbled: but what was the end of it? Forsooth, he was made a ruler over all Egypt.

So this woman, though she was low, and loth to confess her disease, yet she was well promoted after she had confessed it; she was made his daughter, which was a great promotion.

But mark, that Christ saith not unto her, My hem hath healed thee; but he saith, 'Thy faith hath holpen thee.' Peradventure if we had this hem, we should make a great matter of it; which thing were but foolery: let us use prayer, which hath a promise, for God promiseth, that when we pray unto him, we shall be heard; when we pray with a faithful heart, as this woman did, who believed that Christ would help her; and for this faith sake she was so highly commended of Christ, and all the people were edified by her example; but especially Jairus, that great man, whose daughter lay sick; he had cause to strengthen his faith by the example of this woman, which woman believed in the word of God, and therefore she came unto Christ.

Now our Saviour, after he had healed this woman, he goeth to this great man's house, which had called him to heal his daughter; when he cometh near unto the house, there cometh one of Jairus's servants, saying, 'Thy daughter is dead, she is gone, trouble the Master no longer, for all help is past.' Lo, this had been enough to bring Jairus out of his faith, hearing that his daughter was dead already; it was a great temptation unto him. But

CHRIST THE BEST PHYSICIAN. 145

But here ye may learn, that when ye go by the way, and ye have occasion to do a good deed, do it ; follow the example of Christ, for he was going to Jairus's house, and in the way he did this good deed, in healing this diseased woman ; giving unto us an example, that we should not omit any occasion, but whensoever we have fit time to do good, we should do it. And here we learn another thing in our Saviour, namely, that there is no respect of persons with him, he regardeth not the outward shew of men, whether they be poor or rich ; but, as St. Peter saith, ' In all nations he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him : ' for Christ refuseth no man, neither rich nor poor. We see they that be poor, are commonly ill-handled in this world, no man regardeth them, every man despiseth them, but our Saviour, he hath no respect to persons, whether they be poor or rich ; for here we see how he helpeth first the poor woman, and now is going to help the rich man too, to raise up his daughter, which was dead and ready to be buried.

Farther, we learn here by this Jairus to be constant and stedfast in our faith, not to be moved with every wind ; for there were many things which might have moved this Jairus to mistrust our Saviour, and to run from him : First, his servant, that came and told him, ' Thy daughter is gone ; ' which was a great discomfort ; for as long as she was yet alive, he had a good hope, but when he heard that she was gone, it discouraged him very sore : Secondly, the preparation which was made for her to be buried ; for all the people were come now to go with the corse, which was a great discomfort unto him also : Thirdly, the words of our Saviour, most of all, when he said, ' She is not dead, but sleepeth. ' By these words Jairus might have conceived an ill opinion in him, saying, What ! he thinketh that she sleepeth ; no, if it were so, I could raise her up myself. On this wise Jairus was tempted. Now when they came near unto the house, there was a great number of people which laughed our Saviour to scorn when he said that she slept. Where we
may

may learn to be content, though we be despised and not set by in this world ; seeing that our Saviour himself was of such wise despised.

Here is mention made of minstrels ; no doubt they have their good use ; at that time they used them at their burials, as we here use bells. Now our Saviour seeing the people that were come to go with the corse, and the minstrels there ready, he comforted Jairus, who, no doubt, was in great anguish, and said unto him, ' Fear not, but only believe ; continue only in thy faith towards me, and all things shall be well.' Now like as he saith to Jairus, so he saith to us ; in what peril or tribulation soever we be, we should not faint, we should not fear, but believe ; he will regard our faith, as much as he regarded the faith of Jairus ; and we shall attain to such an end as he did. For we must consider, that Almighty God doth sometimes put off the fulfilling of his promises, and helpeth not immediately : but wherefore doth he so ? even for his own glory's sake ; for if we should have presently that thing which we desire, then, peradventure, we should attribute it to our own selves, and not unto God, therefore it cometh afterwards, that when we have it, we may be the more thankful for his help. Therefore let us continue in prayer, and in faith, and no doubt he will help when it is the very time. ' Tarry,' saith the prophet, ' for the Lord, he will come, ' and not tarry ;' * and when he cometh, he will set all things in good order.

Now he saith to the people, ' Why weep ye ?' You must understand that Christ condemneth not all manner of weeping, but only that which is without hope ; of which St. Paul speaketh, ' As they that have no hope.' † But charitable weeping is allowed, yea commanded ; for St. Paul saith, ' Weep with them that weep, be sorrowful with them that be sorrowful.' ‡ Yet do it measurably, as it becometh Christians.

In the time of popery, before the gospel came amongst us, we went to burials with weeping and wailing, as

* Hab. ii. 3.

† I. Thes. iv. 13.

‡ Rom. xii. 15.

though

though there were no God; but since the gospel came unto us, I have heard say, that in some places they go with the corfes grinning, as though they went to a bear-baiting, which thing no doubt is naught; for like as too much weeping is naught, so is it to be 'without affection,'* we should keep a measure in all things. We read in the holy scripture, that the holy Patriarch Abraham mourned for his wife Sarah. So likewise did Joseph for his father Jacob; therefore to weep in measure is not ill, but allowed in God's word.

Now when our Saviour was come to the house, he suffered no man to go in with him but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the child; all the other he thrust out; then he took the maid by the hand, saying, 'Maid, I say unto thee, arise:' and her spirit came again, and she rose straightway. What shall we learn here? we shall learn here that our Saviour did overcome death, that he is the Lord over death, that he hath the victory over him. Secondly, we learn here that our Saviour is very God, because he commandeth death. For I tell you that death will obey none but only God; now he obeyed our Saviour, whereby it appeareth, that he is Lord over death. He saith, 'Maid, I say unto thee, arise;' and presently she was made whole. This is now a comfortable thing, that we know that Christ hath overcome death, and not for himself only, but for us; so that when we believe in Christ, death shall not hurt us, for he hath lost his strength and power; insomuch that it is no more death, but rather a sleep, to all them that be faithful and fear God; from which sleep they shall rise to everlasting life. Also the wicked truly shall rise, but they shall rise to their damnation; so that it were better for them never to rise.

Now ye have heard that our Saviour is the Lord over death, and so consequently very God, because he raised up this young woman which was dead. But it may be ye will say, it is no great matter that he raised up a mai-

* Rom. i. 31.

den which was dead ; for we read of Elijah the Prophet, that he raised up a young man from death. Answer, truth it is, he raised him up, but not by his own power, nor in his own name, but by the power of God ; he did it not by himself ; but Christ our Saviour, he raised up Lazarus, and this young maid, by his own divine power, shewing himself to be very God, and the Son of the Father eternal ; therefore he saith, ' I am the resurrection and the life : ' this was his doctrine. Now to prove that doctrine to be true, he did miracles by his own divine power, shewing himself to be very God ; so did not the prophets, they were God's servants, and God's ministers ; but they were not gods themselves, neither did they any thing in their own name.

Now to make an end : Let us remember what we have heard, let us take heed that we be not customary sinners, but rather let us strive with sin ; for I tell you, there be but few of those which spend all their time in pleasures of the flesh, that speed well in the end ; therefore let us take heed. The murderer upon the cross sped well ; but what, then, let us not presume to tarry in wickedness still, to the last point of our life ; leave wickedness, and strive with your fleshly affections, then ye shall attain in the end to that felicity, which God hath prepared for all them that love him ; to whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory. *Amen.*

SERMON

S E R M O N XXVIII.

CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE.

Preached on the first Sunday in Advent 1552.

ROMANS xiii. 11—14.

It is now high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is passed, the day is come nigh; let us therefore cast away the deeds of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light; let us walk honestly, as in the day-light; not in eating and drinking, neither in chambering and wantonness, neither in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it.

HERE St. Paul requireth a great thing of us, namely, that we should awake from sleep. But that sleep of which he speaketh is especially a spiritual sleep, the sleep of the soul; yet we may learn by the text, that too much sluggishness of the body is wicked, to spend that good time in sleeping which God hath given us to do good in. But St. Paul speaketh here especially of the sleep of the soul; that is, of sin and wickedness, which is called in scripture sleep, from which sleep St. Paul would have us to rise; for our salvation is come near. How is it that St. Paul saith, that our salvation is come nearer? Answer, because Christ is come already, and maketh intercession for us. All they that were before his coming, as the patriarchs and prophets, and all other faithful, they believed that he should come, but so do not we; we believe that he is come already, and hath

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fulfilled all things. The Jews which are in our time, believe that he shall come; but they tarry in vain, their faith is a deceitful faith, because it is against God's word; for Christ is not to be looked for to come again and suffer. No, not so, but he will come again to judge both the quick and the dead. Our Saviour Christ was revealed long before he came to suffer. First, in Paradise, when God spake of the woman's seed; afterward unto Abraham, David, and all the holy prophets; they spake of this gospel, and taught the people to look for their Saviour; for their sayings and prophecies were somewhat dark and obscure. Now when he came and dwelt amongst us, and shewed us the way to heaven, with his own mouth he taught us this gospel, and suffered his painful passion for us; this was a more clear revelation than the prophets had. Therefore Christ our Saviour faith to his disciples; 'Happy are the eyes which see those things which ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.'* But wherefore were they called blessed that they saw him? for if the blessedness stand in the outward seeing, then Adam and Eve, and all the prophets were not blessed, but cursed; but it is not so; ye must understand, that our Saviour in that manner of speaking putteth only a difference between the times. For at that time when he was here on earth, he was more clearly revealed than before, when he was only promised to come; when he did miracles, cast out devils, healed the sick, it was a more clear revelation, than when God said, 'The seed of the woman shall break the head of the serpent.'† When John Baptist pointed and shewed him with his finger, it could better be understood than the prophecies which were spoken of him.

Therefore now since Christ is come indeed, and hath overcome the devil, and redeemed us from our sins, and

* Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

† Gen. iii. 15,

suffered

suffered the pains, not for his own sake, but for our sakes; for he himself had no sin at all, he suffered to deliver us from everlasting damnation; he took our sins, and gave us his righteousness. Now since that all these things are done and fulfilled, therefore saith Paul, 'Our salvation is come nearer now, than when we believed;' taking occasion of the time, to move us to rise from our sleep, as who says, Christ is come now, he hath fulfilled all things, of which things the prophets have spoken before, therefore arise from your sins. The same sleep of which St. Paul speaketh here, is the sleep of sin, a spiritual sleep, not a natural sleep of the body: as for the natural sleep, it is lawful for us to sleep and to take our rest, when we do it measurably, not too much setting aside our business, whereunto God hath called us, and do nothing but play the sluggards; when we do so, then we do naught, and sin against God. Therefore we must awake from the sinful sleep, we must set aside all slothfulness, with all other vices and sins.

Let us follow therefore this good warning which St. Paul giveth us here, let us rise from the sleep of sin, let us take a hearty purpose to leave all wickedness. But may we do so? May we rise from sin? Yes, that we may; for God hath provided a remedy for us; what is that? Forsooth penance,* we must have the staff of penance, and rise up withal; and this penance is such a salve that it healeth all sores, if a man have done all the world's sin, yet when he taketh this staff of penance in his hand, that is to say, when he is sorry for it, and intendeth to leave them, no doubt he may recover; and God is that same physician who will heal him.

We read in the gospel of Luke, that when Pilate had done a notable murder; and had mingled the blood of certain Jews with their own sacrifices, now some came and told Christ what Pilate had done; Our Saviour ma-

* By penance, our author means repentance, as appears by his explanation; the word is taken from the old Latin translation, and is still preserved by the Papists, but in a different sense, as they confine it to acts of outward mortification inflicted by a priest.

keth them answer, saying, 'I tell you, except ye repent, 'ye shall all likewise perish.'* As who should say, whatsoever Pilate hath done, see that ye do penance, and amend your naughty livings, or else ye shall be destroyed. This was a good reproof that he gave unto the Jews, who were ready to speak of other mens' faults, but of their own they made no mention; as it is our nature to be more ready to reprove other mens' faults than our own; but our Saviour he commanded them to look at home, to see to themselves; and this penance is the chiefest thing in all the scripture.

John Baptist when he began to preach, his sermon was 'Do penance;'+ so likewise Christ saith, 'Do penance, 'and believe the gospel.'† But wherein standeth the right penance, and what is penance? Answer, penance is a turning from sin unto God, a waking up from this sleep of which St. Paul speaketh here. But wherein consisteth this penance? The right penance consisteth in three points; the first is contrition, that is, I must acknowledge myself that I have transgressed God's most holy laws and commandments; I must confess myself to be guilty; I must be sorry for it, abhor myself and my wickedness. When I am now in that case; when I shall see nothing but hell before me, as long as I look upon myself and upon the law of God. For the law of God when it is preached bringeth us to the knowledge of our sins; for it like as a glass which sheweth us the spots in our faces, that is, the sins in our hearts. But we may not tarry here only in the law and ourselves; for if we do, we shall come to desperation: for Judas was come so far, he had this point; he was, no doubt, a sorrowful man as any in the world. But it was to no purpose; he was lost for all his sorrowfulness; therefore we must have another point; what is that? Marry, Faith; we must believe in Christ, we must know that our Saviour is come into this world to save sinners; therefore he is called JESUS, because 'He shall save his people from

* Luke xiii. 3.

† Matt. iii. 2.

‡ Mark i. 15.

'their

‘their sins;’* as the angel of God himself witnesseth. And this faith must be not only a general faith, but it must be a special faith; for the devil himself hath a general faith, he believeth that Christ is come into this world, and hath made a reconciliation between God and man; he knoweth that there shall be remission of our sins, but he believeth not that he shall have part of it; that his wickedness shall be forgiven unto him, this he believeth not; he hath a general faith: but I say that every one of us must have a special faith. I must believe that when Christ saith, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will ease you;’† that Christ calleth me unto him, that I should come and receive everlasting life at his hands. With such a special faith I do apply his passion unto me: in that prayer that our Saviour made when he was going to his death; ‘I pray not for them alone,’ saith he, ‘but for them also which shall believe in me through their preaching, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; and that they also may be one in us.’‡ So that Christ prayeth for us as well as for his apostles, if we believe in him; and so Christ’s prayer and our belief bringeth the remedy unto our souls.

So ye have heard now these two points which pertain to right repentance, namely, contrition and faith; when we believe that God will be merciful unto us, and through his Son forgive our wickedness, and not impute the same, to our eternal destruction. But yet there is another point, which is, that I must have an earnest purpose to leave sin, and to avoid all wickedness as far forth as I am able to do. I must wrestle with sin. I must not suffer the devil to have the victory over me; though he be very subtil and crafty, yet I must withstand him; I must disallow his instigations and suggestions. I must not suffer sin to bear rule over me; for no doubt if we fight and strive, we may have the victory over this serpent, for Christ our Saviour hath promised unto us his help and

* Matt. i. 21.

† Ib. xi. 28.

‡ John xvii. 20, 21.

comfort;

comfort ; therefore St. James saith, ' Withstand the devil, ' and he shall fly from you.'*

So ye have heard now wherein standeth right penance. As for satisfaction, or absolution of our sins, there is none but Christ ; we cannot make amends for our sins, but only believe in him who suffered for us : for he hath made the amends for all our sins by his painful passion and blood-shedding. And herein standeth our absolution or remission of sins, namely, when we believe in him, and look to be saved through his death ; none other satisfaction are we able to make.

By this now that I have said, ye may perceive what manner of sleeping is this of which St. Paul speaketh here, namely, the sleep of sin. When we live and spend our time in wickedness, then we sleep that deadly sleep which bringeth eternal damnation with it. And again, ye have heard how you shall rise up from that sleep, how ye shall fight and wrestle with sin, not to suffer it to be the ruler over you. Let us therefore begin even now, while God giveth us so good and convenient a time ; let us tarry no longer ; let us awake from this deadly sleep of sin, which bringeth eternal death, and everlasting pains and sorrows : let us therefore rise to a godly life, and continue in the same until the end.

These things St. Paul speaketh generally to all men, and against all manner of sins ; but now he cometh to specialties ; and first he sheweth what we shall not do, then afterward he telleth us what we shall do ; ' Not in ' eating and drinking, neither in chambering and wantonness, neither in strife and envying.' I marvel that the English is so translated, in eating and drinking ; the Latin version hath, '*Non commestationibus* ;' that is to say, ' Not in too much eating and drinking ;'† for no doubt God alloweth eating and drinking, so it be done measurably and thankfully.

In the beginning of the world, before God punished the world with a flood, when he destroyed all mankind

* James iv. 7.

† Our translation is, ' not in rioting or drunkenness.'

and beasts, save only Noah that good father: in the beginning, I say, mankind eat nothing but herbs, and roots, and fallads, and such food as they could get; but after the flood, God gave unto mankind liberty to eat all manner of clean beasts, all that had life, be it fish or flesh.

Truly, then, we be allowed by God's word to eat all manner of meat that is wholesome for to eat. But ye must understand that there be certain hedges, over which we ought not to leap, but to keep ourselves within the same. Now the first hedge is this, 'Ye shall not eat the flesh with the blood;'^{*} that is to say, we shall not eat raw flesh: for if we should be allowed to eat raw flesh, it should engender in us a certain cruelty, so that at length one should eat another, and so many writers expound this place; so that God forbiddeth here that mankind, or man's flesh should be eaten.

Now ye will say, but when I eat not raw flesh, or man's flesh, then I may eat all manner of flesh or fish, howsoever I can get it. But I tell thee, my friend, you may not eat your neighbour's sheep, or steal his fish out of his pool and eat them, ye may not do so, for there is a hedge made for that; God saith, 'Thou shalt not steal:' here am I hedged in, so that I may not eat my neighbour's meat, but it must be my own meat.

Now then ye will say, so it be mine own, then I may eat of this as much as I will. No, not so; there is another hedge, I may not commit gluttony with mine own meat; for so it is written, 'Take heed of gluttony and drunkenness.'[†] Here is a hedge, we may not eat too much, for if we do, we displease God highly. So you see that we may not eat of our own meat as much as we would, but rather we must keep a measure; for it is a great sin to abuse or waste the gifts of God, or play the glutton with them.

Now then ye will say, if I take them measurably, then I may eat all manner of meat at all times, and every where. No, not so; there is another hedge behind; ye

^{*} Lev. xix. 26,

[†] Luke xxi. 34.

must have a respect to your own conscience, and to your neighbour's : for I may eat no manner of meat against my conscience, neither may I eat my meat in presence of my neighbour, whereby he might be offended ; for I ought to have respect unto him, as St. Paul plainly sheweth, saying, ' I know and am assured by the Lord Jesus, ' that there is nothing unclean of itself, but unto him ' that judgeth it to be common, to him it is common ; ' if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, walkest now ' thou not charitably ; destroy not him with thy meat, ' for whom Christ died.* As for example : When I should come into the north country, and there I should call for any eggs on a Friday, or for flesh, then I should do naughtily, for I should destroy him for whom Christ did suffer. Therefore I must beware that I offend no man's conscience, but rather travail with him first, and shew him the truth : when thy neighbour is taught, and knoweth the truth, and will not believe it, but will abide by his old *Mumpsimus*, then I may eat, not regarding him, for he is an obstinate fellow, he will not believe God's word : and though he be offended with me, yet it is but a pharisaical offence, like as the Pharisees were offended with Christ our Saviour ; the fault was not in Christ, but in themselves. So I say, I must have respect to my neighbour's conscience, and then to my own conscience.

' Neither in chambering and wantonness.' Beware of St. Paul's *nots* and *nons* ; for when he saith *non*, we cannot make it yea : if we do contrary to his sayings, we shall repent it. Beware therefore of chambering. What is this ? Marry, he understandeth by this word chambering, all manner of wantonness. I will not tarry long in rehearsing them ; let every man and woman go into his own conscience, and let them consider that God requireth honesty in all things. St. Paul useth this word chambering ; for when folk will be wanton, they get themselves into corners ; but for all that, God seeth them, he

* Rom. xiv. 14, 15.

will find them out one day, they cannot hide themselves from his face. I will speak no farther of it, for with honesty no man can speak of such vile vices, and St. Paul commandeth us that we shall not speak any vile words.

‘Neither of strife nor envying.’ Envy is a foul and abominable vice, which vice doth more harm unto him that envieth another, than unto him which is envied. King Saul had this spirit of envy, therefore he had never rest day nor night, he could not abide when any man spake well of David. And this spirit of envying is more directly against charity than any other sin is; for St. Paul saith, ‘Charity envieth not:’* therefore take it so, that he that envieth another is no child of God; all his works, whatsoever he doth, are the devil’s service, he pleaseth God with nothing as long as he is an envious person. Who would be so mad now, as to be in such an estate, that he should suffer the devil to bear so much rule over him? No wise nor godly man will be in this estate; for it is an ill estate to be out of the favour of God, to be without remission of sin. Therefore whosoever is an envious man, let him rise up from that sleep, lest he be taken suddenly, and so be damned everlastingly.

Now ye have heard what ye shall not do; we shall not too much eat and drink, and so abuse the gifts of God; we shall not have pleasure in chambering, that is, in wantonness; neither shall we be envious persons, for if we be out of charity, we are also out of the favour of God.

Now followeth what we should do: ‘But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Every man and woman ought to put on Christ; and all they that have that apparel on their backs, they are well, nothing can hurt them, neither heat nor cold, nor wind nor rain.

Here I might have occasion to speak against the excess of apparel which is now used every where, which thing is disallowed in scripture. There be some that

* I. Cor. xiii. 4.

will be conformable unto others, they will do as others, but they consider not with themselves, whether others do well or not. St. Paul commandeth us to put on Christ; to leave the gorgeous apparel. There be a great many which go very gay in velvet and satin; but for all that, I fear they have not Christ upon them, for all their gorgeous apparel. I say not this to condemn rich men, or other's riches; for no doubt poor and rich may have Christ upon them, if they will follow him, and live as he commanded them to live: for if we have Christ upon us, we will not make provision for the flesh, we will not set our hearts upon these worldly trifles, to get riches to cherish this body withal.

I will not say but a man ought to make provision for his house; but to make such provision to set aside God's word and serving of him, that is naught; to set thy heart upon thy riches, as though there were no heaven nor hell, how can we be so foolish to set so much by this world, knowing that it shall endure but a little while? It is a marvellous thing to see, there be some which have lived in this world forty or fifty years, and yet they lack time; when death cometh they be not ready. But I will require you for God's sake, rise up from your sleep of sin and wickedness, and make yourselves ready, set all things in order, so that ye may be ready whensoever death shall come and fetch you; for die we must, there is no remedy; we must leave this world one day, for we are not created of God to the end that we should abide here always.

Therefore let us repent betimes our wicked life, for God wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he shall turn from his wickedness and live. 'As truly as I live, faith God, I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he shall turn from his wickedness and live;*' thus doing, we shall surely attain after this corporal life to everlasting life: which grant us, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

* Ezek. xviii. 32.

S E R M O N XXIX.
THE CALLING OF ANDREW.

Preached upon St. Andrew's day, 1552.

MATTHEW iv. 18, 19, 20.

As Jesus walked by the sea of Galilee he saw two brethren, Simon which was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers: and he said unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men; and they straightway left their nets and followed him.

THIS is the gospel which is read in the church this day; and it sheweth unto us how our Saviour called four persons to his company; namely, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, which were all fishers by their occupation. This was their general vocation; but now Christ our Saviour called them to a more special vocation. They were fishers still, but they fished no more for fish in the water, but they fished now for men with the net that was prepared to that purpose, namely, the gospel; for the gospel is the net wherewith the apostles fished after they came to Christ, but especially after his departing out of this world; then they went and fished throughout the whole world.

Therefore our Saviour chose fishers, that they should be painful and spare no labour, and that they should be eager to catch men with the net of God's word, and to turn the people from wickedness to God. Ye see by daily experience, what pains fishers take; how they watch day and night at their net, and are ever ready to take all such fishes as they can get.

So all our prelates, bishops, curates, and vicars, should be painful in casting of their nets; that is to say, in preach-

preaching of God's word, in shewing unto the people the way to everlasting life, and in exhorting them to leave their sins and wickedness. This ought to be done by them, for thereunto they be called of God; and such a charge they have. But the most part of them set now-a-days this fishing aside, they put away this net, they take other business in hand; they will rather be surveyors, or clerks of the kitchen, than to cast out this net; they have the living of fishers, but they fish not, they are otherwise occupied: but it should not be so; God will plague and most heinously punish them for so doing; they shall be called to make account one day, when they shall not be able to make answer for their misbehaviour, for not casting out this net of God's word, for suffering the people to go to the devil, and they call them not again, they admonish them not, their perishing grieveth them not; but the time will come when they shall repent from the bottom of their hearts, but then it will be too late; then they shall receive their well-deserved punishment for their negligence and slothfulness, for taking their living of the people, and not teaching them.

So when a preacher preacheth the truth, but afterward is fearful, and dares not stand unto it, and is afraid of men, this preacher shall do but little good; or when he preacheth the truth, and is a wicked liver after he hath done, this man shall do but little good; he shall not edify, but rather destroy, when his words are good, and his living contrary unto the same.

Therefore I would wish of God, that all they that should choose holy officers, would give themselves most earnestly to prayer; desiring of God, that they may choose such men as may do good amongst the flock of God.

And so likewise clergymen, they must not run themselves, they must tarry till they be called; they must not flatter for benefices; and therefore the King and his most honourable council must take heed, and not set up those which call themselves; for no doubt they that call themselves intend not to do good, nor to profit the people,
but

but they only seek to feed themselves, and to fill their coffers : and so likewise all patrons that have benefices to give, they should take heed and beware of such men, which seek for benefices, and come before they be called : for such intend not to feed the people with the wholesome doctrine of the word of God ; but rather they seek to be fed of the people, to have their ease, for that they look for ; if they were minded to do good unto the people of God, they would tarry till God did call them ; and then, when they be called, would do their duties ; but to run without the calling of God, is a manifest token that they have another end ; and that they are worldly-minded ; and therefore God complaineth by the prophet, saying, ‘ There were many that ran before I sent them, which were not sent by me.’*

Now to the matter. These men, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, they were called from catching of fishes to the catching of men ; they had a calling, they ran not before they were called ; but we do not so, we order the matter as though God saw us not, and no doubt there be some that think in their hearts, what, shall I tarry till God call me ? Then peradventure I shall never be called, and so I shall never get any thing. But these be unfaithful men ; they consider not that God seeth us every where ; in what corner soever we be, God seeth us, and can fetch us if it please him, that we should be officers, or curates, or such like.

Therefore thou runner, tarry till thou art called, run not before thy time. John Baptist, that holy man, he would not take upon him to come before he was bidden : where was he ? Verily in the wilderness ; he made no suit, I warrant you, for any office ; he tarried till God called him ; for the word of the Lord came unto John, being in the wilderness.† It is no marvel that God fetched him out of the wilderness, for there is no corner in the whole world where any man can hide himself from his presence ; therefore when he will have a man, he can call him,

* Jer. xxiii. 21.

† Matt. iii. 1.

though he be hid in corners ; for the prophet saith,
' God dwelleth aloft, but yet he seeth those things which
' be here in the lowest parts of the earth ; he dwelleth in
' heaven, but for all that, he overseeth the whole earth,
' and all that therein is.'* For though we be cast down
in a deep pit, or dungeon, as Jeremiah the prophet was,
yet for all that he can see us, he will not forget us, for he
looketh down upon those things that be low.

Now therefore let us well consider this, that if God
will have a man to bear an office, he can and is able to
fetch him, wheresoever he be ; and that man that is
called of God to any office, no doubt God will work
with him, he will prosper all his doings, he will defend
him from all his enemies, he will not let him perish.
But now if any man take in hand an office whereunto
he is not called, no doubt that man shall have no good
success, God will not prosper him : and not only that,
but he will extremely punish that man that will take in
hand an office whereunto he is not called of God ; who
seeketh promotions, or goeth about to promote himself ;
as we have an example in the book of Numbers,† that
when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, would not be con-
tent with their vocation, whereunto they were called of
God, but would climb higher and promote themselves ;
what happened ? The ground clave asunder, and swal-
lowed them up, with wife and children, and all that they
had ; this was their end, this reward they had for their
ambition. Whereby it appeareth that God wills that
every man shall keep himself in his vocation, till he be
farther called of God.

Well, Andrew, Peter, James, and John, were not
ambitious, they tarried their calling ; so I would wish
that all men would follow their example, and tarry their
vocation, and not thrust themselves in, till they be cal-
led of God ; for he that cometh by the calling of God
to an office ; he may be sure that his adversaries shall not
prevail against him, as long as he doth the office of his

* If. lvii. 15.

† Ch. xvi.

calling. An example we have in our Saviour, he was sent from God into this world, to teach us the way to heaven. Now in what peril and danger was he, as long as he was here! when he began to preach at Nazareth amongst his kinsfolks, he displeased them so, that they went and took him, and were minded to cast him headlong from the rock whereupon their city was builded; but when it came to the point, he went away from amongst them, because his hour was not come; he had not yet fulfilled or executed that office whereunto God had sent him.

So likewise we read in the Evangelist John, that the Jews many a time took up stones to stone him, but they could not. And how many times sent they their men to take him, yet for all that they could not prevail against him: and these things are not written for Christ's sake, but for our sakes, that we should learn thereby, that if we do diligently our office whereunto God hath called us, then no doubt our enemies shall as little prevail against us, as they prevailed against Christ; for God will be as careful for us as he was for Christ.

We read in the gospel, that when Christ said unto his disciples, 'Let us go up into Jury again;' his disciples made answer unto him, saying, 'Master, the Jews sought lately to stone thee, and wilt thou go thither again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not; but if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.*' With these words our Saviour signifies, that he who walketh in the day, that is to say, he that walketh truly and uprightly in his vocation whereunto God hath called him, that man shall not stumble, he shall not shorten his life, till the twelfth hour come; that is to say, till it please God to take him out of this world, he shall be sure that he shall not shorten his life in doing that thing which God hath appointed him to do.

* John xi. 7—10.

Again, we may be sure, that if we will follow our vocations, we shall lack nothing, we shall have all things necessary to our bodily sustenance. And this appeareth by many examples. When our Saviour sent out those seventy men before him to preach the gospel, having no money in their purses, nor any thing whereupon to live; when they came home again, he asked them, whether they had lacked any thing? They said, No. For they did as Christ had commanded them, therefore they lacked nothing; and so it followeth, that they that will follow their vocations shall lack nothing.

Therefore God saith, 'Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'* For whensoever a man applieth to that vocation which God hath appointed for him, no doubt he shall not be disappointed of living, he shall have enough. Therefore our Saviour Christ saith, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be ministered unto you.'† That is to say, let us live godly as he hath appointed unto us; as for other things, 'Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he will make it;'‡ he will finish all things, for he is able to make a good end of all matters; alas, what a thing is it, that we will not believe these fatherly promises which God hath made unto us in his word! What a great sin is it to mistrust God's promises! For to mistrust his promises is as much as to make him a liar, when we will not believe him:

Every man hath his vocation; as these men here were fishers, so every man hath his faculty wherein he was brought up; but if there come a special vocation, then we must leave that vocation which we had before, and apply that whereunto we be called specially, as these apostles did; they were fishers, but as soon as they were called to another vocation, they left their fishing.

Our Saviour as he went once abroad, met a man, unto whom he said, 'Follow me;' the fellow made answer,

* Matt. iv. 4.

† Ib. vi. 33

‡ Ps. lv. 22.

saying,

saying, ' Let me first bury my father : ' Our Saviour said unto him again, ' Let the dead bury their dead, and ' come thou and follow me. '* Where our Saviour teacheth us, that when we have a special vocation, we shall forsake the general ; for to bury father and mother is a godly deed, for God commandeth us to honour father and mother ; yet when we have such a special calling as this man had, we must leave all other vocations ; for our Saviour would rather have the dead to bury the dead, than that this man should forsake or set aside his vocation.

But this I would have you to note well, that they that have but general vocations may not follow those which have special vocations ; as if we would follow the example of Abraham, we may not. Abraham had a special vocation of God to offer his son, therefore they that afterward followed the example of Abraham, and burned their children, they did naughtily, for they had no commandment of God to do so.

So to preach God's word is a good thing, and God will have that there shall be some which do it ; but for all that a man may not take upon him to preach God's word except he be called unto it ; for if he do it, he doth not well, though he have learning and wisdom to be a preacher ; yet for all that, he ought not to come himself without any lawful calling ; for it was no doubt a good thing to keep the ark from falling, yet for all that Uzza was stricken to death because he took in hand to meddle with it without any commission. †

We have a general vocation, which is this, ' In the ' sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread, till thou be ' turned again into the ground, out of which thou wast ' taken. † This text doth charge us all to labour, rich and poor, no man excepted ; but he must labour that labour which God hath appointed him to do, for God loveth no slothfulness, he will have us to labour, to do our business ; and upon the holy-day he will have us to cease

* Matt. viii. 21, 22. † I. Chron. xiii. 9. ‡ Gen. iii. 19.

from our bodily labour, but for all that he will not have us to be idle, but to hear his word, to visit sick folks and prisoners; these are holy-days work, which God requireth of us; therefore we may not be hindered from those works by bodily labour, we must set aside all bodily labour, and feed our souls upon Sundays in hearing of God's most holy word, and in receiving his holy sacraments. So, I say, labour is commanded unto us, unto every one, no man excepted. All Adam's children are bound to labour; for that which was said unto Adam, is likewise said unto us; and our Saviour himself teacheth us to labour, when he saith to Peter, 'Lead thy boat into the deep, and spread out thy net to catch.'* Here Christ commanded Peter to do his duty, to follow his occupation. Now he that commanded Peter, saying, 'Cast out thy net,' he commandeth us also, every one in his estate, to do the business of his calling; he will have the farmer to follow his trade to till the ground, to sow, &c. yet it is God that giveth the increase of labour. For we may not think, that we by our labour alone may get wealth; no, not so, we must labour indeed, but we must pray God to send the increase; for unless he bless our labour, no doubt we shall labour all in vain. The ordinary way whereby God sendeth us our food is labour, yet for all that we must not set our hearts upon our labour, nor trust therein, but only depend upon God.

Now if a man should ask this question, saying, We are all bound to work for our living, but I pray you by whom cometh the gain of our works? Who giveth the increase of it? There be some kind of people which think, that they bring all things to pass by their own labour; they think they get their livings with their own handy work. Some again there be, which think that the increase of their labour cometh by the devil, that he increaseth and bleaseth their labours. But think ye that any body will say so, that his increase cometh by the

* Luke v. 4.

devil? No I warrant you, they will not say so with their mouth; yet, for all that, their conversation and living sheweth it to be so indeed.

For all they that live by usury, they have their gains by the devil. So likewise all they that sell bad wares, or sell by false weight, or use any manner of falshood, they be in the devil's service, they have his livery; therefore they seek all their gains at his hands, through false and deceitful dealing; and so it appeareth that the devil is the increase of their gains. Therefore such worldlings have a common saying amongst them; they say, if a man will be rich, he must set his soul behind the door; that is to say, he must use falshood and deceit. And therefore, I fear me, there be many thousand in the world which follow this saying, and set their souls behind the doors.

Now to make an end; let us labour every one in that estate wherein God hath set him; and as for the increase, let us look for it at God's hands, and let us be content with that which God will send us; for he knoweth what is best for us; if we have 'Meat and drink, and cloaths, let us be content withal,'* for we cannot tell how soon death will come, and make an end of all together. For happy shall he be, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find well occupied in his vocation.

Almighty God therefore give us grace so to live here in this world, and to apply our business in such wise, that he may be glorified amongst us; so that we may finally come to that felicity which he hath prepared for us.

Amen.

* I. Tim. vi. 8.

S E R M O N X X X.

THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT.

Preached on the second Sunday in Advent, 1552.

LUKE xxi. 25—36.

And there shall be signs in the sun and the moon, and in the stars, and in the earth: the people shall be at their wits end through despair; the sea and the waters shall roar, and mens' hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which shall come on the earth. For the powers of heaven shall move: and then shall they see the Son of Man come in a cloud, with power and great glory, &c.

THIS gospel is read this day in the church, and it shall be for our lesson. It is taken out of the twenty-first chapter of Luke, and it maketh mention of the glorious coming of our Saviour Christ, how and in what manner of form he shall come; for, as the scripture witnesseth, 'We shall all come before the judgement seat of Christ,'* and there receive every one according unto his deserts; after his works he shall be rewarded of Christ, which shall be at that time their judge; and there shall be signs and tokens before his glorious and fearful coming; for then he shall come to judgement. His first coming into this world was to suffer his painful passion, and to deliver mankind out of the bondage and dominion of the devil. But when he cometh again, he

* II. Cor. v. 10.

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will come after another manner than he did the first time; for he will come with great power and might, with the host of heaven, with all the angels of God, and so fit as the judge of all men. And this is most certain that he will come, but we cannot tell when, or at what time his coming shall be; for the day of his coming is hidden from us, to the end that we should be ready at all times; for the very angels of God themselves know not the hour or day; neither did Christ himself know it as he was man, but as he is God he knoweth all things; nothing can be hid from him, as he saith himself, 'The father sheweth me all things.'* Therefore his knowledge is infinite, else he were not very God. But as concerning his manhood, he knew not that time, for he was a true natural man, sin excepted; therefore like as he was content to suffer heat and cold, and to be weary and hungry; like as he was content to suffer such things, so he was content, as concerning his manhood, to be ignorant of that day. He had perfect knowledge to do his father's commission, to instruct us, and to teach us in the way to heaven, but it was not his commission to tell us the hour or day. For as far forth as ignorance is a painful thing unto man, so far forth he was content to be ignorant, like as he did suffer other things.

I will rather spend the time in exhorting you to make ready against that day, and to prepare yourselves, than curiously to recite or expound the signs thereof, which shall be before this fearful day.

'And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon,' &c. There be some learned men which expound these tokens of the destruction of Jerusalem, but that is not the matter; if they have gone before the destruction of Jerusalem, then they have gone before the end of the world, and so admonish us to make us ready, and to leave sin, lest we be taken with it.

As touching the Jews, our Saviour Christ wept over them, and threatened them what should come upon them,

* John v. 20.

because they despised him, and would not receive God's holy word, and leave their sins; like as we do, which take our own pleasure, care little for him or his word; we cannot suffer when our faults are told us, we repine and grudge at it, like as the Jews did; therefore our Saviour, knowing what should come upon them, wept over the city, prophesying that it should so be destroyed, that one stone should not be left upon another: and so it came to pass according to his word; for Titus, the son of Vespasian, who was Emperor at that time, destroyed the city of Jerusalem utterly, about forty years after the death of our Saviour Christ. But wherefore were they destroyed? Because they would not believe the sayings of our Saviour Christ; they would take their pleasures; they would follow their forefathers, as our Papists are wont to say. When they cannot defend themselves with scripture, then they will defend themselves with the ignorance of their forefathers; much like unto the Jews, which could not away with the doctrine of our Saviour, because of its disagreeing from the customs and traditions of their forefathers.

But what happened? Their destruction fell upon them before they perceived it, and destroyed the most part of them full miserably, God knoweth; and not only that, but as the story doth shew, they that were left, and not brought to destruction, were so vilely handled, and so despised amongst all men, that thirty were sold for a penny, and so by that means they were scattered throughout all the world; and in every country where they came, they were made slaves and tributaries, and shall be so till the end of the world: for the scripture saith, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden under feet, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.'*

Now which are Gentiles? Answer, all the people in the whole world are Gentiles, be they whomsoever they will, except the Jews, all other are Gentiles: we Englishmen are Gentiles, so are likewise the Frenchmen, Dutch-

* Luke xxi. 24.

men, and other nations, are all Gentiles. Now our Lord saith, that Jerusalem shall not be inhabited, 'till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;' that is to say, till all they are come into the world, which are appointed of God to come; that is to say, they shall never come together again till the end of the world to inhabit Jerusalem, as they did formerly: for the Jews have many times attempted to build it again, yet for all that they were not able to bring it pass; for God's word will not, and cannot be falsified, for the wrath of God hangeth upon their heads because of their wickedness, wherewith they have provoked God.

We read in history, that in the days of the Emperor Adrian the Jews gathered themselves together out of all cities, to the intent that they might get Jerusalem again, which was at that time in the Emperor's hands: but what doth the Emperor? He gathered together a great host, and made war against them, and in the end scattered them; after which the Emperor made a proclamation, that no Jews should come into the city, neither to buy or to sell; yea, and farthermore, to the intent that they should be without any hope of recovery, he changed the name of the city, and called it Elia.*

After this, in Julian the Emperor's time,† which Emperor was an apostate, for he had been a Christian, and after he came to be Emperor he forsook the Christian faith, and all goodness and godliness; and not only that, but he did all that he could to vanquish and pull down Christ's true religion, and therefore he went about to set up the Jews again, and gave them liberty to gather themselves together, and to return again to Jerusalem; and not only gave them this liberty, but also he assisted them with all manner of things, that they might bring to pass their purpose: and so upon that the Jews gathered themselves together, with an infinite number of people, and went to Jerusalem, and so began to make preparation for

* A. D. 130.

† He died A. D. 363.

the building of the temple, and even laid the foundation. The history saith that this host of the Jews was a wonderful rich host, for their mattocks and spades, and the other instruments which they employed about building of the temple, were all made of fine silver. So these Jews had the Emperor's favour, his aid and help; they were rich, and able to set up their kingdom again, and so to falsify the word of God, after man's reason, for they lacked no worldly things. But what think you did God? He sendeth a strong hurling wind, which blew away all their provisions which were made by them for the building of the temple; and after that there came such an earthquake, that they were almost out of their wits: and this was not enough, but there came also fire, and burned up all their works; and so finally they were scattered again one from another.

So by these histories it manifestly appeareth, that no man's power is able to stand against God, or disappoint him of his purposes; for Christ our Saviour hath said, 'Heaven and earth shall perish, but my word shall endure for ever.' A man would think, that there is nothing so durable as heaven and earth is, yet for all that, they shall rather perish, than that the word of God should be falsified.

Now God hath fulfilled his word as touching the destruction of Jerusalem, he hath made true his word of wrath, think ye not that he will fulfil his word of mercy too? Yes, no doubt, ye may be sure of it, that he which promiseth that if we believe in Christ we shall be saved, he will as well execute and bring to pass that word, as he hath brought to pass the word of his wrath and indignation over the Jews: for we have his warrant in scripture, therefore we ought not to doubt of it; for thus he saith, 'So entirely hath God loved the world, that he hath sent his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'*

* John iii. 16.

‘ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and in the earth.’ There are some which think that there shall be great eclipses, against the course of nature, and ye know that there hath been strange things seen in the element divers times; sometimes men have seen a ring about the sun; sometimes there hath been seen three suns at once, and such like things have been seen in times past; which no doubt signifieth that this fearful day is not far off, in which Christ will come with his heavenly host, to judge and reward every one of us according to his deserts.

‘ And the people shall be at their wits end through despair:’ Men shall be wondrous fearful, they shall pine away for fear; even good men fear this day; indeed the worldlings will scarce believe that there shall be such a day, that there shall be another world. Like as in the flood time, they were quite careless, they thought all things were very sure, till such time the flood came upon their heads. And so it is at this time with the ungodly too, they care not for this day of judgement, it grieveth them not, till it fall upon their heads.

‘ And then shall they see the Son of Man come in a cloud with power and great glory.’ Certain it is, that he shall come to judge, but we cannot tell the time when he will come: therefore seeing that he will come, let us make ready, lest he find us unprepared; and take this for a rule, that as he findeth us, so he shall judge us.

‘ The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light;’ ye shall not take these words so, as though the sun and moon should be obscured or darkened, their light being taken from them; but it is to be understood, that through the brightness of his glory they shall be obscured and darkened. The sun no doubt will shine, but her light shall not be seen, because of the brightness of his glory; like as when ye set a burning candle in the sun, the candle burneth indeed, but her light is not seen, because of the brightness of the sun. So it will be at that time with the sun, for though she be the brightest and clearest creature above all others, yet for all that,

Christ with his glory and majesty will obscure her; for his light that he shall bring with him, shall be so bright, that the other shall not be seen. And this his coming shall be an heavy day unto them that be wicked; and again, a joyful pleasant day unto them that have no delight in wickedness.

Therefore Christ saith, 'When ye see these things, 'then hold up your head;' that is to say, be merry and rejoice, 'For your redemption is come near.' So Christ comforteth us, and maketh us to hold up our heads, for our redemption is come nearer than it was before.

What! hath he not redeemed us before by his death and passion? How chanceth it then, that our redemption is come nearer? Truly Christ redeemed us before indeed by his death and passion; yet it appeareth not unto us who it is that shall be saved or damned, for we see the good and the bad bear both the names of Christians; so that we cannot tell, as long as we be here in this world, which be elect and which not; but at the last day, then it shall appear who is he that shall be saved; and again, who shall be damned. And therefore Christ saith, our redemption draweth near; that is to say, it shall appear unto the whole world that we are the children of God. For if we die now in the state of salvation, then at the last general day of judgement we shall hear this joyful sentence proceeding out of the mouth of our Saviour Christ, when he shall say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess that kingdom which is prepared for you 'from the beginning of the world.' And though we have much misery here in this world, though it goes hard with us, though we must bite on the bridle, yet for all that, we must be content, for we shall be sure of our deliverance, we shall be sure that our salvation is not far off. I pray God we may be of this happy number.

But there be some (and hath been a great number of us) which have trusted in masses and pilgrimages, in setting up candles, and such like foolishness; but I tell you all this is to no purpose: for if all the masses which were said in all Christendom since the mass began, if all these masses,

masses, I say, were bestowed upon one man to bring him out of the state of damnation, it were all to no purpose, and to no effect. Therefore let us not put our hope and trust in such fooleries, for if we do, no doubt we shall deceive ourselves.

Again, there be some people which defer and delay their amendment of life till such time as they shall die, then they take in hand to leave sin, when they are not able to commit any more; they will take their pleasures as long as they are able, they think it time enough to repent at the last hour, when they shall depart, and forsake this world. Such people no doubt are in a dangerous state; for they are not sure whether they shall have at that same last time grace or not, to repent and be sorry for their sins. Peradventure their hearts shall be so hardened in sin and wickedness, that they shall not be able to repent, or be sorry for their faults. Therefore the best and surest way is to repent betimes, while we have time, and to be sorry for our wickedness, and to take an earnest mind and purpose to leave sin; if we do so, then no doubt we shall be taken up with Christ, and dwell with him in heaven everlastingly, in great honour and glory, where we shall have such Joy, which no tongue can express, 'no eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard the inestimable felicities and treasures which God hath laid up for his faithful.*

'And then shall they see the son of man in a cloud with power and great glory.' St. Paul to the Thessalonians setteth out the coming of Christ and our resurrection, but he speaketh in the same place only of the rising of the good and faithful that shall be saved. But the holy scripture in other places witnesseth, that the wicked shall rise too, and shall receive their sentence of Christ, and so go to hell, where they shall be punished world without end. Now St. Paul's words be these; 'This say we unto you in the word of the Lord; that we which shall live and shall remain at the coming of

* I. Cor. ii. 9.

‘ the Lord, shall not prevent them which sleep. For
 ‘ the Lord himself shall descend with a shout, and the
 ‘ voice of the archangel and trump of God, and the
 ‘ dead in Christ shall arise first; then we which shall
 ‘ live, even we which shall remain, shall be caught up
 ‘ with them also in the clouds to meet the Lord in the
 ‘ air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord; where-
 ‘ fore comfort yourselves one another with these words.*

By these words of St. Paul it appeareth, that they which died in the beginning of the world shall as soon be saved by Christ, as they which shall be alive here at the time of his coming. I would have you to note well the manner of speaking which St. Paul useth; he speaketh like as if the last day should have been come in his time. Now if St. Paul thought that this day should have been come in his time, how much more shall we think that it shall be in our time? For no doubt he will come, and it is not long thereunto; as it appeareth by all scriptures which make mention of this day; it will come, but it shall come suddenly, unawares, as a thief in the night; for a thief when he intendeth to rob a man's house, to break up his chests, and take away his goods, he giveth him not warning, he letteth not the good man of the house know at what time he intendeth to come, but rather he intendeth to spy such a time, that no man shall beware of him. So no doubt this last day will come one day suddenly upon our heads, before we be aware of it; like as the fire fell down from heaven upon the Sodomites unlooked for; they thought that all things were well, therefore they took their pleasures, till such time the fire fell down from heaven and burned them up with all their substance and goods.

‘ And he shewed them a similitude, Behold the fig-tree
 ‘ and all the trees, when they shoot forth their buds, ye
 ‘ see and know of your own selves that summer is then
 ‘ near at hand. So when ye see the tokens which shall
 ‘ go before this fearful day, it is time to make ready.’

* I. Thes. iv. 16, 17.

But here a man might ask a question, saying, I pray you wherein standeth this preparation? I tell you, Christ our Saviour he sheweth us how we shall make ready ourselves, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcome with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this world, and so this day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the whole world. Watch ye therefore continually and pray, that ye may escape all those things that shall come, and that you may stand before the Son of Man.' Here Christ sheweth where in this preparation standeth. Well, I pray God grant us such hearts, that we may look diligently about us, and make ready against his coming; that we may be amongst them which shall enjoy eternal life, as all those shall who believe in Christ our Saviour, to be cleansed from their sins through his death and passion; no doubt such shall hear this joyful sentence of Christ our Saviour, 'Come to me, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world.' We esteem it to be a great thing to have a kingdom in this world, to be a ruler, to be aloft and bear the swing; how much more then should we regard this kingdom, which Christ our Saviour offereth unto us, which kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, where there shall be no end of joy and felicity; therefore all they that will be content to follow our Saviour's steps, to suffer with him here in this world, and bear the cross after him, they shall reign with him in everlasting glory and honour; which God grant us even the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XXXI.
JESUS THE TRUE MESSIAH.

Preached on the third Sunday in Advent, 1552.

MATTHEW xi. 2—5.

When John being in prison heard the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that shall come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto him, Go and shew John again what ye have heard and seen, how that the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

THIS is read in the church this day, and it shall serve us this day for our lesson.

It beginneth, ‘When John being in prison heard the works of Christ;’ and here is to be had in consideration of whom he had heard these wonderful works which our Saviour did, for he could not hear it without a teller, some body told him of it. The Evangelist Luke * doth shew, how and by whom John Baptist heard such things which our Saviour Christ did; namely, by his own disciples: for when our Saviour had raised up the widow’s son, which was dead at Naim, the disciples of John came unto their master, and told him how Christ raised up that same young man. And this is a thing to be marvelled at, that John had so much liberty, that his disciples could come to him, and speak with him, Herod the

* Chap. vii. 18.

King being a cruel man, and a heathen King. No doubt it is a great matter that his disciples could have liberty to speak with him; for a man would think that no man should have been permitted to come near to him: for I know that in Christian realms, some being cast into prison for God's word sake, have not been suffered that their friends should come near unto them. And here it appeareth, they were more straitly holden and more severely handled than John was. So we read likewise of St. Paul, which was cast into prison at Rome by that wicked and cruel tyrant, the Emperor Nero, which, though he was a cruel tyrant, a wicked man, and a persecutor of God's church and his holy word, yet for all that, Paul had liberty to speak with every one that would come unto him and commune with him.* But we have had experience that preachers which profess the same words which Paul taught, are more straitly handled in Christian realms, than in times past they were when the rulers and princes were not Christians. Christian princes be more earnest to extinguish God's word and his true religion, than the heathen were which knew not, or would not know God.

But here you may ask, what manner of works were these which our Saviour had done in the presence of John's disciples? Answer, Luke the Evangelist sheweth a great and marvellous act, which Christ our Saviour had done immediately as John's disciples came unto him. The story is this: 'When Christ went into a city which is called Naim, and many of his disciples following him, and much people, when he was come to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, which was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city went with her.† Now when our Saviour saw this corpse, and the widow, which was a miserable sorrowful woman, for she had lost her first husband, and afterward her son, in whom she had all her hope and comfort in this world, him she had lost now, therefore she was sorrowful, and not without

* Acts xxviii. 30.

† Luke vii. 11, &c.

cause. But what doth our Saviour? Verily he comforted her, saying, 'Weep not.' Here may all widows which are destitute of comfort in this world learn to trust in Christ, and to seek aid and help of him: for no doubt, like as he comforted this miserable widow, so he will comfort and help them all that call upon him in their necessity; for his hand is not shortened, or his power diminished; he is as strong, as rich, and as mighty as ever he was; therefore let widows learn here to seek aid and help by him.

Now when he had comforted her with his words, he came nigh and touched the coffin, and they that bare the coffin stood still; and he said, 'Young man, I say unto thee, arise;' and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. Now upon this there went such a rumour throughout all the countries, that every man marvelled at it; and John's disciples went to their master, and told him of it, what wonderful things he did. Note here, that when we hear that our Saviour doth such wonderful supernatural works, it should be a great comfort unto us; for by this his deed, it appeared manifestly, that he is a master over death, and hath power to command him; so that death is under his dominion: for to raise a man up, whom death hath devoured already, is as much as to command death. But death will give place to no man, not submit himself to any, save only unto God; and therefore it appeareth here that our Saviour is very God, because death must obey him; which is a most comfortable thing unto us that believe in such a Saviour. And therefore if he hath power over death, then we shall be sure that death neither shall nor can hurt us which believe in him; for when we believe faithfully in him, he is able to defend us from death, hell, and the devil, so that they shall not be able with all their might or power, to hurt us, or do us any mischief, but we shall have life everlasting: for he saith, 'He that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live.'* That is to say, though he

* John xi. 25.

depart out of this natural bodily life, yet for all that, he shall live everlastingly with me, world without end. This is now an exceeding comfort to all Christian people, for they may be assured that when they believe in Christ, and Christ taketh their parts, there shall be nothing neither in heaven nor in earth, that shall be able to hurt them, or hinder them of their salvation.

Now I will ask, what should move John's disciples to come and tell him the miracles which Christ our Saviour did? Think ye they came with a good will to set out Christ, and to magnify his doings; or came they with an envious heart towards him? Answer, they came with an envious heart, as appears by the circumstances being well considered: for ye must understand, that John had very much ado to bring his disciples to Christ; they thought that Christ and his doings, and that his conversation were nothing in comparison of John. For John's strict life which he led in the wilderness made such a shew and outward glistering, that our Saviour was very little regarded in comparison of him; for our Saviour led not so hard and strict a life as John did; he eat and drank, and would come to mens' tables when he was bidden; he would keep company with every body, rich and poor, whosoever received him, and would believe in him: but John was ever in the wilderness, out of the company of all men; therefore the disciples of John much more regarded him than Christ our Saviour, and even exhorted John that he would take upon him to be Christ, and the Saviour of the world.

And when they had heard of any miracle that Christ had done, they came unto their master, and told him of it disdainfully, as who would say, Thus and thus we have heard that Jesus hath done, wherefore shewest not thou thyself too? Wherefore workest not thou miracles as he doth? Every man speaketh of him; do thou somewhat too, that the people may know thee to be a great man, as well as Jesus.

Now John intending to correct and amend their false opinion which they had in Christ and him, for they re-

garded him too much, and Christ, who was most to be regarded, him they esteemed for nothing, in comparison of John; therefore John, seeing the ignorance of his disciples, acts a wise and faithful part; for hearing them talk of the wonderful works which Christ our Saviour did, he sendeth them to Christ with this question, 'Art thou he that shall come, or shall we look for another?'

If we look only upon the outward shew of these words, a man might think, that John himself was doubtful whether Christ were the Saviour of the world or not, because he sendeth his disciples to ask such a question of him. But ye must understand, that it was not done for John's sake to ask such a question, but rather for his disciples sake; for John thought that this should be the way to bring them to a good knowledge, namely, to send them to Christ. For as for John himself, he doubted not, he knew that Christ was the Saviour of the world; for when John should baptize Christ, he saith unto Christ, 'I have more need to be baptized of thee, than thou of me.*' So that it manifestly appeareth that John doubted not of Christ, but he knew most certainly that he was the eternal Son of God, and the Redeemer which was promised unto the fathers to come into the world; for it was told him from above, that upon whomsoever he should see the Holy Ghost coming down from heaven visibly, that same was he; which afterward happened: for John, after he had baptized him, saw the Holy Ghost come down in the form of a dove; farther, John pointed him out with his finger, saying, 'See the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.'† So, I say, it is most evident, that John himself doubted not, but he did it only to remedy the doubts of his disciples. Now when John's disciples came to Christ, they delivered their message, saying, 'Art thou he that shall come, or shall we look for another?' What doth Christ? He made not answer with words, but with deeds; he made not much ado in setting out himself with great words, but he

* Matt. iii. 14.

† John i. 29—34.

shewed himself to be Christ indeed; for he did such miracles which no man else could do, but only he which was both very God and man. I would wish of God that we would do so too; that when we be asked a question, whether we be Christians, or we have the gospel, the true word of God, or not? I would wish, I say, that we could shew our faith by our works and godly conversation, like as he shewed himself to be Christ, by his acts and deeds; but I tell you, we be far otherwise, our acts and deeds disagree far from our profession. We have God's holy word in our mouth, but we follow the will and pleasure of the devil in our outward conversation and living. But Christ did not so, for he shewed himself by his outward works and conversation that he was very Christ the Saviour of the world. So we should do too; we should live so uprightly, so godly, that every one might know us by our outward conversation to be very Christians.

But what manner of works doth Christ, whereby he sheweth himself to be the very Messias and Saviour of the world? Answer, He healeth all manner of diseased folks, the blind, the lame, the lepers, and all others which would come unto him, and desire help at his hands. And finally, he preached the gospel, those joyful tidings, unto the poor, unto them Christ preached the gospel. But I pray you, how happeneth it, that he saith, 'The poor receive the gospel?' Answer, Because the most part of the rich men in this world despise and contemn the gospel, they esteem it for nothing: why? wherefore despise they the gospel? Because the most part of rich men in this world, I will not say all, do either put their hope in their riches, or else they come naughtily by their riches, or else they keep them ill; they heap them up together, or else they spend them ill: so that it is a very rare thing to find a godly rich man. Therefore Christ saith, 'The poor receive the gospel;' for they are most meet thereunto; they are all comfortless in this world, and so most meet to receive the gospel.

The Prophets long before had prophesied of these works which Christ, when he should come, should do; for so it is written, 'God cometh his own self, and will deliver you; then shall the eyes of the blind be lighted, and the ears of the deaf opened; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the dumb man's tongue shall give thanks. In the wilderness also there shall be well-springs.'* This text of the Prophet witnesseth, that Christ is the very God, for he hath done such works and miracles of which the Prophet speaketh. Now in the same Prophet it is farther written, how that Christ should preach the gospel unto the poor comfortless people; for so he saith, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, for the Lord God hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the poor, that I might bind up the wounded hearts, that I might preach deliverance unto the captive, and open the prison to them that are bound, that I might declare the acceptable year of the Lord.'†

Here the Prophet prophesied, that when Christ should come, he should be a worker of such acts, and a preacher which should preach the gospel unto the poor: and therefore now, when the disciples of John came unto him, demanding of him, whether he were Christ or not, he answered by his works. Like as he saith in another place in the gospel to the Pharisees, 'The works which I do, bear witness of me.' As if he should say, I prove myself what I am by my works. Again he saith, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.' So that most manifestly he proveth himself to be that Prophet, which was spoken of before by the prophets and other holy men of God. John the Evangelist in his gospel saith, 'And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is Christ, the son of the living God, and that in believing, ye might have life through his name.'‡ This is a very notable saying, and most comfortable to

* Is. xxxv. 4—6.

† Ib. lxi. i. 2.

‡ John xx. 30, 31.

all troubled consciences. Jesus hath done many things which are not written, but these are written, that we should believe him to be Christ; that that Jesus, Mary's Son, that was born at Bethlehem, and nourished at Nazareth, is the very Saviour of mankind; and that in believing in him, we shall have life everlasting. So that there was never any which believed in Christ, which was lost, but all believers were saved; therefore it is not to be doubted, but that if we will believe, we shall be saved too.

We read in a book intituled, 'The Lives of the Fathers,' that there was once a very holy man, (as he seemed to all the world) worthy to be taken up into heaven; now that man had many disciples, and on a time he fell into a great agony of conscience, insomuch that he could not tell what to do. Now his disciples seeing him in this case, said to him; how chanceth it that ye are so troubled, father? For, certainly, there is no body more holy than you have been, therefore you need not fear, for no doubt you shall come to heaven. The old father made them answer, saying; Though I have lived uprightly, yet for all that it will not help me, I lack something yet; and so he did indeed, for certainly if he had followed the council of his disciples, and put his trust in godly conversation, no doubt he should have gone to the devil. For though we are commanded to do good works, and we ought to do them, yet for all that we must beware how we do them; when we do them to the end to be saved by them, then we do them not as we ought to do; then we thrust Christ out of his seat and majesty. For indeed the kingdom of God is merited, but not by us. Christ hath merited the kingdom of heaven for us, through his most painful death and passion.

Now when the disciples of John were come to Christ, and had done their errand, asking him whether he were Christ or not, our Saviour said unto them; 'Go and shew John again what ye have heard and seen.' And here we may learn by the way what a patient man our Saviour Christ was, who could so well bear with the
gross-

grossness of John's disciples; for they had heard many times before of John their Master, that Christ was the Saviour of the world, yet they could not believe it; and so with their unbelief they came to Christ, who refused them not, nor yet reviled them, but treated them most lovingly and gently; beareth with their wickedness, leaving us an example to do so too. For we may learn by this example, not to be too hasty, but to bear with our neighbours, though they be not as we would have them to be, yet we should not revile them, or banish them out of our company; but rather bear with their weakness, like as Christ beareth with the disciples of John.

Now you may ask me, how could the works which our Saviour did in raising up the dead, &c. prove him to be the Saviour of the world, when other holy men did the same works as well as he? And this must be answered thus: Elisha and Elias raised up dead bodies, to prove by such miracles that they were the right ministers of the living God, and that their doctrine was the doctrine and the very word of God; but they never said we be Christs, or we be the Sons of God, yea, and very Gods. No, no; they never took upon them such things; but our Saviour, when he did the same works, he took upon him to be Christ, to be the Saviour of the world, to be the natural Son of God; and to the confirmation of such his sayings, he did such works; therefore he saith, 'I am the resurrection and the life.'* Yea, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'† Yea, and when he talked with the woman at the well, she said unto him, 'When the Messias cometh he shall tell us all things.' Then he said unto her, 'I am he that speaketh unto thee; I am the same Messias which was to come, and promised of God; I am he.'‡

Farther, the time shewed it that Christ should come; for so it was prophesied by the good holy father and patriarch Jacob, when he blessed his sons, saying, 'The scepter shall not depart from Judah, and a law-giver

* John xi. 25.

† Ib. xiv. 6.

‡ Ib. iv. 26.

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‘from between his feet, until Shilo come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.’*

Now at that time, when our Saviour was come, the scepter was taken from Judah; for all Jewry was under the dominion of the Romans; therefore Shilo must needs come. So it appeareth, that by reason of the time, Christ must needs be the right Saviour of mankind. Again, Christ raised up the dead, and healed the sick in his own name, by his own authority; so did not the prophets, or the apostles, for they did it not in their own strength, but by the help of God. So St. Peter raised up Dorcas, that godly woman, but not by his own power; but Christ our Saviour he did all things, as he that had authority; ‘Young man, I say unto thee, arise.’ So his works which he did by his own divine power proved him to be very God, and the same Saviour which was promised unto the world.

Now when our Saviour had told the disciples of John, his works and miracles which he did, he addeth, ‘And blessed is he who is not offended by me.’ Here he touches them, he rubs them on the gall; he did not mean John, for John was not offended, but he meant themselves, for they were offended because of his familiar conversation. But you will say, how can a man be hurt by him, from whom cometh no hurt at all? I will tell you, John’s disciples were hurt of Christ, and yet the fault was not in Christ, but in them; Christ lived a common life, he was a good familiar man, he eat and drank as others did; he came to mens’ tables when he was called; infomuch that some called him a glutton: therefore the disciples of John, seeing his simple life, were offended with him.

But I pray you, should Christ have forsaken his manner of living and followed the life of John, because some were offended with him? No, not so. It was they took offence themselves, he gave them none; he did according unto his calling, as he was appointed of his Father.

* Gen. xlix, 10.

We read in the gospel of John, when our Saviour said unto his disciples and the other people, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, ye shall have no life in you.*' By these sayings of Christ, many were offended with him, insomuch that the greatest number went from him, and forsook him; they could not abide him. Now, was Christ to be blamed for that, because he said so? No, no; for he said nothing but the truth. So likewise the preacher, when he saith the truth, is not to be blamed though some be offended with him.

Now when the disciples of John were gone, then he beginneth to speak to the people of John Baptist: 'What went ye out into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken of the wind?' There was once an old man which counselled a young man, that he should be like a reed, he should be ruled as the world goeth, for a reed never breaketh, but boweth which way soever the wind bloweth, and the oak sometimes breaketh, because it will not bend. But Christ speaketh these words to the great commendation of John, because of his steadfastness; he was not as a reed shaken by the wind. There be many reeds now-a-days in the world, many men will go with the world: but religion ought not to be subject to policy, but rather policy unto religion. I fear me there will be found a great number of us reeds, when there shall come a persecution, that we must suffer for God's word sake; I fear me there will be a great many that will change, and will not be constant as John was.

'Or what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment; behold, they that wear soft raiment, are in Kings houses.' Here in these words, our Saviour condemned not fine cloaths, as silk, fatten, or velvet; for there is nothing so costly but it may be worn, but not of every body; Kings and great men are allowed to wear such fine gear, but John he was a clergyman, it behoved not him to wear such. Peradventure if he had been a flatterer, as some be now-a-days, then he might have

gotten it; but John, knowing his office, knew well enough that it behoved not him to wear such fine cloaths; but how our clergymen wear them, and with what conscience I cannot tell. I hear say that some of them wear velvet shoes and slippers; such fellows are more meet to dance the morrice-dance than to be admitted to preach. I pray God amend such worldly fellows, for else they be not meet to be preachers.

Now I will make an end concerning offences; peradventure ye will say, how chanceth it that God suffereth such offences in the world? Answer, The judgements of the most Highest are inscrutable. God can use them to good purposes; therefore he saith, 'It is necessary that there be offences.*' Then ye will say, Why should we then be damned for offences, when offences are needful? Answer, When we do ill, we shall receive our reward for our illness, for it is no thanks to us, when God can use them to good purposes; we ought to be punished when we do naught. Therefore the best way is to beware and take heed of offences, and all other ungodliness, and live uprightly in the fear of God. So that we may inherit the life everlasting, which he hath prepared for us from the beginning of the world; which grant us, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, one God and three Persons, world without end. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XXXII.

LOVE THE CHRISTIAN'S LIVERY.

Preached the twenty-eighth of October, 1552.

JOHN XV. 12.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

SEEING the time is so far spent, we will take no more in hand at this time, but this one sentence ; it shall be enough for us to consider this well, and to bear it away with us : ‘ This I command unto you, that you ‘ love one another.’ Our Saviour himself spake these words at his last supper before he was taken ; it was his last sermon that he made unto his disciples before his departure ; it is a very long sermon : for our Saviour doth like as one that knoweth he shall die shortly, therefore is desirous to spend that little time that he hath with his friends, in exhorting and instructing them how they shall lead their lives. Now among other things that he commanded us, this was one, ‘ This I command unto you, ‘ that ye love one another.’ My translation hath *Hæc mando vobis*, the plural number ; the English goeth as though it singularly were but one, ‘ This is my commandment.’ I examined the Greek, where it is in the plural number, and very well ; for there be many things that pertain to a Christian man, and yet all those things are contained in this one, that is, love ; he lappeth up all things in love.

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LOVE THE CHRISTIAN'S LIVERY. 191.

Our whole duty is contained in these words, 'Love one another.' Therefore St. Paul saith, 'He that loveth another, fulfilleth the whole law :'* so that it appeareth all things are contained in this word, 'Love.' This love is a precious thing: our Saviour saith, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye shall love one another.'

So that he maketh Love his cognizance, his badge, his livery. Like as every lord most commonly giveth a certain livery to his servants, whereby they may be known that they pertain unto him; and so we say, yonder is this lord's servants, because they wear his livery: so our Saviour, who is the Lord above all lords, would have his servants to be known by their liveries and badge, which badge is love alone. Whosoever now is indued with love and charity, is his servant; him we may call Christ's servant; for love is the token whereby you know that such a servant pertaineth to Christ; so that charity may be called the very livery of Christ. He that hath charity is Christ's servant; he that hath not charity, is the servant of the devil. For like as Christ's livery is love and charity, so the devil's livery is hatred, malice, and discord.

But I think the devil hath a great many more servants than Christ hath; for there be a great many more in his livery than in Christ's livery; there be but very few which be indued with Christ's livery, with love and charity, gentleness, and meekness of spirit; but there are a great number of those that bear hatred and malice in their hearts, that be proud, stout, and lofty; therefore the number of the devil's servants are greater than the number of Christ's servants.

Now St. Paul sheweth how needful a thing this love is. I speak not of carnal love, but this charitable love is so necessary, that when a man hath her, without all other things it will suffice him. Again, if a man have all other things and lacketh that love, it will not help him, it is all vain and lost. St. Paul used it so;

* Rom. xiii. 8.

‘ Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels,
‘ and yet had no love, I were even as sounding brass, or
‘ as a tinkling cymbal. And though I could prophesy and
‘ understand all secrets and all knowledge; yea, if I had
‘ all faith, so that I could move mountains out of their
‘ places, and yet had no love, I were nothing: and
‘ though I bestowed all my goods to feed the poor, and
‘ though I gave my body even that I burned, and yet
‘ had no love, it profiteth me nothing.’* These are
goodly gifts, yet St. Paul calleth them nothing when a
man hath them without charity; which is a great com-
mendation, and sheweth the great necessity of love, inso-
much that all other virtues be in vain when this love is
absent. And there have been some which thought that
St. Paul spake against the dignity of faith; but you must
understand that St. Paul speaketh here not of the justify-
ing faith, wherewith we receive everlasting life, but he
understandeth by this word faith, the gift to do miracles,
to remove hills; of such a faith he speaketh, and not of
lively justifying faith; for this right faith is not without
love, for love cometh of faith, love is a child of faith;
for no man can love except he believe.

Now when we will know who be in his livery or not,
we must learn it of St. Paul, who most evidently describ-
eth charity, which is the very livery, saying, ‘ Love is
‘ patient, she suffereth long.’ Now whosoever fumeth
and is angry, he is out of this livery; therefore let us
remember that we do not cast away the livery of Christ,
our master. When we be in sickness, or any manner
of adversities, our duty is to be patient, to suffer it wil-
lingly, and to call upon him for aid, help, and comfort;
for without him we are not able to abide any tribulation:
therefore we must call upon God, he hath promised to
help; therefore let us not think him to be false or untrue
in his promises, for we cannot dishonour God more than
in not believing or trusting in him. So let us beware
above all things of this dishonouring of God; we must

* 1. Cor. xiii. 1, &c.

be patient, trusting, and most certainly believing that he will deliver us when it seemeth him good, who knoweth the time better than we ourselves.

'Charity is gentle, friendly, and loving; she envieth not.' They that envy their neighbour's profit when it goeth well with him, such fellows are out of their liveries, and so out of the service of God; for to be envious is to be the servant of the devil.

'Love doth not frowardly, she is not a provoker;' as there be some men which will provoke their neighbour so far that it is very hard for them to be in charity with them; but we must wrestle with our affection, we must strive and see that she keep this livery of Christ, our master; for 'the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking to take us at advantage,' to bring us out of our liveries, and to take from us the knot of love and charity.

'Love swelleth not, is not puffed up;' but there be many swellers now-a-days, they be so high, so lofty, in-somuch that they despise and contemn all others: all such persons are under the governance of the devil; God ruleth not them with his good spirit, the evil spirit hath occupied their hearts and possessed them.

She doth not dishonestly; 'she seeketh not her own; she doth all things to the good of her neighbours.' A charitable man will not promote himself to the damage of his neighbour. They that seek only their own advantage, forgetting their neighbours, they be not of God, they have not his livery. Farther, 'Charity is not provoked to anger; she thinketh not evil:' we ought not to think evil of our neighbour, as long as we see not open wickedness in him; for it is written, 'you shall not judge;'^{*} we should not take upon us to condemn our neighbour: and surely these condemners of other mens' works be not in the livery of Christ.

'She rejoiceth not in iniquity;' she loveth equity and godliness. And again, she is sorry to hear of falshood, of stealing, or such like, which wickedness is now at this

^{*} Matt. vii. 1.

time most commonly used ; yet there was never such falshood among Christian men as there is now at this time ; truly I think, and they that have experience report it so, that among the very Infidels and Turks there is more fidelity and uprightness than among Christian men ; for no man setteth any thing by his promise, yea and writings will not serve with some, they be so shameles that they dare deny their own hand writing : but, I pray you, are those false fellows in the livery of Christ ? No, no ; they have the badge of the devil, with whom they shall be damned world without end, except they amend and leave their wickedness.

‘ She suffereth all things, she believeth all things.’ It is a great matter that should make us to be grieved with our neighbour ; we should be so patient when our neighbour doth naught, we should admonish him of his folly, earnestly desiring him to leave his wickedness, shewing the danger that followeth, namely, everlasting damnation. In such wise we should study to amend our neighbour, and not to hate him, or do him a foul turn again, but rather charitably study to amend him : whosoever now doth so, he hath the livery and cognizance of Christ, he shall be known at the last day for his servant.

‘ Love believeth all things.’ It appeareth daily that they that be charitable and friendly are most deceived, because they think well of every man, they believe every man, they trust their words, and therefore are most deceived in this world, among the children of the devil. These and such like things are the tokens of the right and godly love ; therefore they that have this love are soon known, for this love cannot be hidden in corners, she hath her operation ; therefore all that have her are well enough, though they have no other gifts besides her. Again, they that lack her, though they have many other gifts besides, yet it is to no purpose, it doth them no good ; for when we shall come at the great day before him, having not this livery, (that is, love) with us, then we are lost ; he will not take us for his servants : but if we have this livery in this world ; that is, if we love our
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neighbour, help him in his distress, be charitable, loving, and friendly unto him, then we shall be known at the last day; but if we be uncharitable towards our neighbour, hate him, seek our own good to his damage, then we shall be rejected of Christ, and so damned world without end.

Our Saviour saith here in this gospel, 'I command you those things:' he speaketh in the plural number, and lappeth it up in one thing, which is, that we should love one another. Much like St. Paul's saying in the thirteenth chapter to the Romans, 'Owe nothing to any man, but to love one another.' Here St. Paul lappeth up all things together, signifying unto us, that love is the consummation of the law; for this commandment, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' is contained in this law of love; for he that loveth God will not break wedlock, because wedlock breaking is a dishonouring God, and serving of the devil. 'Thou shalt not kill:' he that loveth, will not kill, he will do no harm. 'Thou shalt not steal:' he that loveth his neighbour as himself, will not take away his goods. Those that do steal or defraud, remember not that Christ commanded us, saying, 'This I command you, that ye love one another.' This is Christ's commandment. Moses, the great prophet of God, gave many laws, but he gave not the Spirit to fulfil the same laws: but Christ gave this law, and promised unto us, that when we call upon him he will give us his Holy Ghost, which shall make us able to fulfil his laws, though not so perfectly as the law requireth, (for as long as we be in this world, we can do nothing as we ought to do;) yet our works which we do are well taken for Christ's sake, and God will reward them in heaven. Therefore our Saviour saith, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light,'* because he helpeth to bear them; else, indeed, we should not be able to bear them. And in another place, he saith, 'His commandments be not heavy;† they be heavy to our flesh, but being aided

* Matt. xi. 30.

† I. John v. 3.

with the Spirit of God, to the faithful which believe in Christ they be not heavy; for though their doings be not perfect, yet they are well taken for Christ's sake.

You must not be offended because scripture commendeth love so highly, for he that commendeth the daughter, commendeth the mother; for Love is the daughter, and Faith is the mother; Love floweth out of Faith; where faith is, there is love: but yet we must consider their offices, faith is the hand wherewith we take hold on everlasting life.

Now let us enter into ourselves, and examine our own hearts, whether we be in the livery of God, or no; and when we find ourselves to be out of this livery, let us repent and amend our lives, so that we may come again to the favour of God, and spend our time in this world to his honour and glory, forgiving our neighbours all such things as they have done against us.

And now to make an end. Mark here who gave this precept of love; Christ our Saviour himself. When, and at what time? At his departing, when he should suffer death; therefore these words ought the more to be regarded, seeing he himself spake them at his last departing from us. God of his mercy give us grace so to walk here in this world, charitably and friendly one with another, that we may attain the joy which God hath prepared for all those that love him. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XXXIII.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Preached on Christmas day, 1552.

LUKE ii. 8—20.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night; and lo the angel of the Lord came upon them, &c.

THIS gospel maketh special mention of the nativity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, declaring how Mary, with her husband Joseph, came after the commandment of the Emperor, from Nazareth unto Bethlehem, the city of David, of whose lineage and tribe she was; what miseries and calamities she suffered by the way, and how poor and miserable she was, having nothing that pertained to a woman being in her case, you may right well consider; and as touching his nativity, his poverty, how he was born in a stable among beasts, lacking all manner of necessary things which appertained to young children: wherefore Mary his mother wrapped him, as it is most like, in her own apparel, and laid him in a manger; where he was shewed, not to the rulers of this world, neither to kings, potentates, or bishops, but rather to simple shepherds, and poor servants keeping their sheep in the field. To these poor men the angel of God was sent, who proclaimed these great things unto them; saying, 'Be not afraid, for behold I bring you tidings of great gladness that shall come to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'

This is the greatest comfort in the world, to know that our Saviour is born, that he is abroad, and at hand unto every one that calleth upon him. What greater gladness can be unto a man that feeleth his sin, and seeth his damnation before his eyes? Unto such a man nothing is more acceptable than to hear that there is a Saviour which will help him and heal his sores. Therefore this message of the angel was very joyful tidings.

The angel bad them go unto Bethlehem and search for the child; and forthwith a great many angels came together rejoicing, and praising God for our sakes, that the Redeemer of mankind was born into the world: for without him nothing availeth in the sight of God the Father; without him no man can praise God, because it hath pleased God for his Son's sake only, to shew himself favourable and loving unto mankind, and to receive only that prayer which is made unto him in the name of Christ our Saviour. Therefore all those which come without him before God shall be rejected as persons rebellious against God and his constitutions: for the will, pleasure, and counsel of God is, to receive only those which come to him in the name of his Son our Saviour, which know themselves, lament their own sins, and confess their own naughtiness and wickedness, and put their whole trust and confidence in the Son of God, the Redeemer of mankind, as the angels themselves testify.

Here in this gospel note, that there was singing and rejoicing for the great and unspeakable goodness and mercy of Almighty God the Father, whom it pleased to redeem mankind through the death of his only, and most dearly beloved Son our Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, very God and very man, the Son of God after his Godhead, the son of Mary after his manhood; which he hath taken upon him for man's sake, to redeem and deliver the same from all misery, and to set him at unity with God the Father, and finally to bring him to everlasting life.

Now it followeth in the text; 'As soon as the angels were gone from them,' &c. Mark here that the an-

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gels as soon as they had done their business, they returned unto their master which had sent them. By the which all good and godly servants may learn, that whensoever their masters send them on their business, they ought to do the same diligently, and quickly to return again to their masters.

We read here that the angels appeared visible and in sight; by the which we shall consider, that whensoever or wheresoever the word of God is preached, there are the angels present. Therefore it is meet for us to come with great reverence to the word of God, where himself with his angels are present.

‘The angels return to heaven,’ &c. Here I will not dispute before you, where heaven is, nor how many heavens there be. For it is sufficient to know, that wheresoever God doth exhibit and shew himself, there is heaven. God is every where, as he saith, ‘I fill heaven and earth;’* but wheresoever most apparently he exhibiteth himself to his saints and angels, the same properly is called heaven, and thither went these angels after they had done their message, to wait upon the Lord, ready to go and do all that which he would command them.

‘The shepherds said one to another, Let us go unto Bethlehem, and see these things which we hear say is happened, that the Lord hath shewed unto us.’ Here note the faith of these poor shepherds which believed the saying of the angels so stedfastly, that they were ready to go and do after the commandment of the said angels. They did not as many of us do, which are so slothful that we will scarce abide one hour to hear the word of God; and when we have heard the same, we believe it not, we regard it not, it goeth in at one ear and out at the other. Wherefore it is not to be marvelled that God is angry with us, seeing we are so forgetful and unthankful for his great and exceeding benefits shewed unto us in these latter days of the world.

* Jer. xxiii. 24.

‘ Let us go to Bethlehem,’ saith the shepherds. Here is to be noted in these shepherds a great charity among themselves, in that one exhorteth another to go to follow the word of God. Many folks now-a-days agree and exhort themselves to do wickedly, but to exhort their neighbours to do any goodness as those shepherds did, they will not agree. Therefore let us not be ashamed to learn of these poor shepherds to follow their examples. When we hear the word of God, let us exhort one another to follow the same, and let us agree in goodness, to seek Christ, and to follow him, according to his word, and then we shall find him. Let us walk charitably, not seeking our own interest, but the honour and glory of God, and the wealth of all Christians, with exhortations, admonitions, and prayers one for another, that the name of God may be magnified among us, and his will known and fulfilled. Of these poor shepherds we may learn much goodness, yea the best Doctor of Divinity need not be ashamed to learn of them, and to follow their examples, which are now saints in heaven, and the inheritors of everlasting life.

But yet we must beware that we go not too far; for we may not make gods of them, nor call upon them, as we have been taught in times past, because God will be called upon, honoured and worshipped alone; he may not suffer any to be equal with him; as he himself saith, ‘ I give mine honour to none.’* Therefore we must call upon him only, and seek all manner of comfort at his hand, which is the fountain of all goodness, and not at the hand of saints.

Farther, we learn in this gospel the nature of very true and unfeigned faith. These shepherds, as soon as the angels were gone from them, consulted what was to be done, and at the length with one consent concluded to forsake all their flocks of sheep and cattle, and go unto Bethlehem to seek the Saviour. Here appeareth their great faith; for they were in peril of body and

* Is. xlii. 8.

goods. To leave a flock of sheep a whole night without a shepherd could not be done without great danger, for that same country brought forth many wild and harmful beasts, enough to devour a whole flock of sheep in one night: but faith, when it is not feigned, feareth no peril nor danger, a faithful man knoweth that God is able to defend him, and to help him in all tribulation. And here is verified the saying of our Saviour Christ, that 'Whosoever shall lose his life, shall find it.'* These shepherds put their lives in adventure, yea, they put themselves to the greatest peril that might be; but at length they found the Saviour, which restored to them their souls, and bodies, and everlasting life. Here we may learn to be hearty, and to do manfully for the gospel's sake, believing undoubtedly that God is able and will preserve us in the midst of all our tribulations, so that we do that which is our duty to do; that is, live and die in God's quarrel, and so to forsake ourselves, that we may find him which will give us life everlasting.

Farther, here may all those be ashamed which set so much by this world, that they cannot find in their hearts to forego one farthing for God's sake. Such shall receive their judgements of these shepherds that were so hearty in God's cause, and not without peril of their lives. Therefore return, O thou covetous heart, return to God, amend thy life; consider the momentary and short time that thou hast here to live, and that when thou shalt depart hence, thou must be judged after thine own wickedness. And the more careful thou art to keep thy money and substance, the sooner shalt thou lose both that and thy soul also, which is the greatest treasure above all other.

They came with haste unto Bethlehem, 'And found Mary and Joseph, and the babe laid in a manger, according to the saying of the angel,' &c. Here let every man follow the example of the angel, which told the shepherds no lies: so let every man be upright in his talk, and say nothing except he be sure that it be so:

* Matt. x. 39.

for when you do otherwise, you follow not this angel. Make no manner of promise, neither great nor small, except you be able to keep it.

'They find Mary and Joseph; and the child lying in 'a manger.' We may learn of these shepherds not to be offended with the poor kingdom that our Saviour kept in this world; for we see most commonly that the rich and wealthy of this world despise and condemn the word of God. Let us therefore be despised in this world with Christ our King, that we may have afterward with him everlasting life, when the proud shall be thrust into everlasting fire. For these shepherds were not offended with the poverty of our Saviour, and did therefore stay and meddle no farther, but they went and told of it to other folks; which thing they could not do without peril of their lives: for the pharisees were so stubborn, that they would suffer none other doctrine to be taught than their own fancies; as it appeared afterward when they killed Christ himself, and after him a great number of the apostles: yet for all that these poor shepherds were content to lose their lives in God's quarrel. Therefore they go and teach their neighbours and others how the Messiah and Saviour of the world was born of a virgin, and how the angel of God had opened it unto them

But what followed of their teaching, or what became of it? It begot a wondering and a gazing: every body marvelled at it, and was desirous to talk of it, because it was a new matter, as we see in this our time, a great number of people pretend to the gospel, and bear the name of gospellers, because it is a new thing, and therefore it is the more pleasant unto them. So was it at that time, every body would talk of it in all places, but there were few or none that believed. For we read not that any of them went forth to seek the child, and so to confirm his or their faith; no, there was none; it was but a talk, and so they used it; wherein you may note the unfaithfulness and unthankfulness of this world, which will not receive the great benefits of God offered unto us. The shepherds told them how the angel of God

had

had opened the matter to them, but the foolish people would not believe it. And even so at this time the preachers go abroad and shew unto the people what God hath done for them, how he hath delivered them from sin, death, and hell: but the people are so blinded with unthankfulness, that they will not believe the benefits of God, nor receive them, but make a gazing and a wondering at the matter.

But what did Mary the mother of Christ? The Evangelist saith, 'She pondereth it in her heart,' she weighed the matter with herself. She did not as our well-spoken dames do: she took not in hand to preach; she knew that silence in a woman is a great virtue, therefore she made nothing of the matter; she boasted not of her stock, to be of the lineage of noble King David; neither did she praise her own child, but would rather hear him to be praised of another; she tarried until the Lord himself had opened the matter: neither would she be too hasty in promoting herself to honour.

Farther, here is to be noted, the temptation, and trial wherewith Mary was tempted and tried; she heard by the angel that she should bring forth a Saviour, whose kingdom should last for ever. And now that he is born, there cometh no body to visit him but poor shepherds; which seemed strange unto her, and such as might make her much to marvel at the matter, and to overthrow her faith. But Mary comforted herself with the word and promise of God, which was, that her son should reign for ever: this she believed, and therefore took no harm of the trial, but rather much good; for this visitation of the shepherds was an establishment of her faith, and a great increase of the same. And here is verified the saying of St. Paul. 'All things work for the best to them that love God.'*

Farther, by these shepherds we learn, that God is not partial, he hath not respect to any person, neither to the rich, wise, nor mighty; but he delighteth in those which

* Rom. viii. 28.

are meek and lowly in spirit, unto such God openeth himself; as Christ saith, 'I thank thee, heavenly Father, 'that thou hast hidden these things from the wise men 'of this world, and hast opened them unto the simple.* Which saying of Christ is verified now upon us; for God hath hidden the divine mysteries of his word from the pope, cardinals, bishops, and the great learned men of this world, and hath opened it unto us; therefore let us be thankful for his innumerable benefits poured upon us so richly and abundantly, let us follow therefore the example of these shepherds: let us come to Christ, with an earnest mind, and hearty zeal to hear the word of God, and then follow it indeed; for not the hearer shall be saved, but the doer and follower thereof; as he saith, 'Not those that call me 'Lord, 'Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God, but those 'which do the will of my Father which is in heaven.† Wherefore let us follow the word of God, let us glorify and magnify his holy name in all our works and conversations, wherein consisteth the very thankfulness and true service which we owe unto him.

'And the shepherds returned lauding and praising 'God for all the things that they had heard and seen,' &c. They were not made religious men, or monks, but returned again to their business, and to their occupation; where we may learn every man to follow his occupation and vocation, and not to leave the same.

Here I will make an end, without any rehearsal or recital of that which is already said. The Lord of heaven and earth make us diligent and ready to do his will, and so to come finally to everlasting life, through Christ our Lord: to whom, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory for ever and ever, world without end. *Amen, Amen.*

* Matt. xi. 25.

† Ib. vii. 21.

S E R M O N XXXIV.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Preached at Grimsthorpe on St. Stephen's day, 1552.

LUKE ii. 6, 7.

And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn, &c.

I SHEWED you yesterday, right worshipful audience, what was the occasion that Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer, came to Bethlehem, where it was prophesied that he should be born. The occasion was this; Octavius being Emperor over the great empire of Rome, at that time when Christ should be born, as it was prophesied he should be born while the second temple stood: now this Octavius sent out a general proclamation, that all countries under his dominion should be taxed, and give him a certain sum of money.

But God intended another thing. Octavius with this proclamation sought nothing but to fill his purse, and to make money; but God designed that way to fulfil his prophesy; for it was prophesied a long time that Christ should be born in Bethlehem: now she could not come thither except by some occasion, and therefore this was the occasion, namely, that she should come and be taxed. And here we shall consider and weigh the obedience that

Mary the mother of Christ and her husband shewed, that she was content to take such a great journey in hand with her husband Joseph, to shew herself obedient to the magistrates.

Now by this occasion came Joseph and Mary unto Bethlehem, a long journey, and poor folks, and peradventure on foot; for we read of no horses that she had, as our great ladies have now-a-days. Well, she was great with child, and was now come to Bethlehem. A wonderful thing to consider the works of God. The Emperor Octavius served God's purpose, and yet knew nothing of him; for he knew not what manner of man was born at that time when his proclamation was sent out: but John Baptist that went before our Saviour Christ, he shewed what manner of man Christ was, when he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.'*

By these words are shewed to what end Christ was sent into the world, namely, to take away sins. And before this, Zachariah, the father of John Baptist, brake forth into praising of God, saying, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation.'† Now if Zachariah because of the birth of John rejoiced in God, how much more should we laud and praise God, that Christ our Saviour himself is born; for John Baptist was the fore-runner. He was but a servant of God, yet Zachariah his father so much rejoiced in him. How much, I say, should we praise God, that the Lord above all Lords hath taken upon him our humanity, and is made man, for this great benefit; that he would vouchsafe to humble himself so much, as to take our nature upon him; for this cause, to deliver us out of the hands of the old serpent the devil, in whose kingdom and dominion all mankind should have been if this Saviour had not come into the world.

* John i. 29.

† Luke i. 68, 69.

We have here to consider the great benefits of God the Almighty Father, that it hath pleased him through his great goodness and love which he bare towards us which were his enemies, that it hath pleased him, I say, to give unto us for our sakes his only Son into these miseries and calamities, and to suffer him to take our nature upon him, and to deliver us by his most painful and grievous passion. Now to come to the knowledge of this benefit, you must consider what he was before he was incarnate and made man,

Now therefore you must know, that he was the natural Son of God, yea God himself, the Lord and King over heaven and earth, through whom all things were made and created, and by whom all things are kept and sustained, ruled, and governed; that same God, that same Son of God, refused not to humble himself far beyond all measure, to take upon him such a vile nature, for he was made very man,

You have heard this day in the service of St. Stephen, how he called upon Christ, saying, ' Lord Jesus, take thou my spirit ;'* lifting up his eyes unto heaven, signifying that Christ is very God; which thing no doubt St. Stephen would not have done, if Christ had not been very God. This I tell you, to the intent that you should consider with yourselves what Christ was before he took our nature upon him; and again, consider what he hath done for us, and how exceedingly he hath been humbled

Now I will shew you what man is of his own nature, left to himself; for when we know what man is, then we shall perceive what great benefit we have received of God the Father Almighty, in that he hath sent his only Son to be a sacrifice for us, and to help us out of the state of damnation, and to remedy this impureness of our nature,

Now this our nature, David, the holy king and prophet, describeth with few words, saying, ' Lo, in iniquity am I born, and in sin hath my mother conceived

* Acts vii. 59.

‘me:’* and he speaketh not of himself only, but of all mankind; he painteth us out in our own colours; shewing that we all are contaminated from our birth with sin, and so should justly be fire-brands in hell world without end. This the holy prophet shewed to put us in remembrance of our own wretchedness, to teach us to despair of our own holiness and righteousness, and to seek our help and comfort by that Messias whom God hath promised our forefathers, and now hath fulfilled the same promise. Another scripture we have, which saith, ‘The Lord looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that did well; but they were all declined, they were all naught together.’† God looked down to consider whether there were some that had understanding of him or not. What found he when he made inquisition? Marry this, ‘All men have declined from God; there was not one that did good, no not one.’ Here we may perceive what we be of ourselves, of our own nature. Farther, it is written in God’s book, ‘God hath concluded all mankind under sin:’‡ so that all mankind was sinful and destitute of the favour of God, save only Christ.

Wherefore, I pray you, have I rehearsed these scriptures? Marry, to this intent, to shew how great need we have of Christ; for no doubt if we had not had him, all mankind should have been damned, yea the best of us, world without end: but that we have deliverance, that the kingdom of heaven is opened unto us, that same brought he to pass with his passion; for he took upon him our nature, and so deserved for us everlasting life; for by him we have it, and therefore we must thank him for it, we must to him give all honour and praise.

David, that holy man, when he considered this great benefit, what saith he? ‘What shall I give unto the Lord for all those things which he hath given unto me?’ Then he maketh himself answer, and saith, ‘I will call upon the name of the Lord; I will take the cup of

* Ps. li. 5.

† Ib. xiv. 2, 3.

‡ Gal. iii. 22.

‘health;

'health;'* that is to say, I will bear the cross that he shall lay upon me willingly, without any grudging. Now therefore let us say so too, O Lord, what shall we give unto thee again? What amends shall we make thee, seeing thou hast given us thine only natural Son, which took upon him our vile nature, and suffered most painful death? For that we have a brother in heaven, what shall we now do? How shall we shew ourselves thankful? Marry, 'We will call upon the name of the Lord;' we will praise him for all his goodness, we will shew ourselves thankful with a godly upright conversation. 'We will take the cup of health;' we will bear all calamities and crosses that thou shalt lay upon us willingly, without any grudging. This is all that we can do, and when the devil cometh and tempteth us, as no doubt he will not sleep, we shall defy him, knowing that we have a brother in heaven which hath overcome him and all his power; therefore we shall not need to fear him, or care for him, though he be busy with us, and tempt us in all manner of things to bring us to destruction. Let us defy him, and give God thanks which so mercifully hath dealt with us, and delivered us from all our sins: let us take the cross meekly, whatsoever it be; though it be in misery or poverty, or other calamities. Let us be content withal, for they be but intended to excite us to call upon God, when we feel the burden; and no doubt we shall be heard when we call as we ought to do, that is to say, with a faithful heart; then no doubt he will take them away, so that we shall be no more troubled with them, or else he will mitigate and assuage them in such sort, that we shall be able to bear the burden of them.

'And she brought forth her first-begotten Son.' These words after the outward appearance, sound as though Mary the mother of Christ had more sons than Christ. And we read in scripture that Christ had brethren, which argueth that Mary had more sons besides Christ: but we must consider the phrases of the Hebrew tongue. The

* Ps. cxvi. 12, 13.

Jews in their tongue call all those which are kinsmen, brethren, and so the kinsmen of our Saviour were called his brethren, after the manner of their language, not that they had one mother, or that Mary had more sons than Christ. So by this, that the Evangelist saith, 'And she brought forth her first-begotten Son : ' some would prove, that she had more than one Son ; Christ was the first begotten, but she had more beside him. But I would have them to consider this word *prima genitum*, which signifieth him *qui primo aperuit vulvam*, him that first opened the womb ; but not that she had any more after.

Now let us go forward, and consider his great extreme poverty. They came to Bethlehem, where they could get never a lodging in the inn, and so were compelled to lie in the stable, and there Mary the mother of Christ brought forth that blessed child, through whom, and in whom all the nations of the earth are and shall be blessed ; and there ' she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, ' and laid him in a manger, because there was no room ' for them in the inn.' Here began the misery of the Lord over all Lords, even at his first coming into this world, when he was laid in a manger, as soon as he was born, to taste poverty and miseries, to make amends for our sins and wickedness, and so to take away from us the wrath of God our heavenly Father, which lay upon all mankind so heavy, that we should all have been condemned world without end, if this child had not been born into the world.

And here we may learn by his poverty to comfort ourselves when God sendeth poverty unto us, and not to think because we are poor, therefore God hateth us, or will condemn us ; but rather consider with ourselves, and call to remembrance the poverty of Christ our Saviour. He was the beloved Son of God, and God himself, and yet he was content to be born in misery, and to sustain most vile poverty, and penury of all manner of those things which are required necessarily to the sustentation of this life. There be some which when they be in trouble say, O, if God loved me, he would not punish

me so, he would not suffer me to be vexed so grievously with poverty, and lack of necessities; which indeed is not so, for whom God loveth he punisheth. Examples we have in David, what troubles, calamities, and miseries he had, and yet God loved him, insomuch that he called him a man after his heart's desire; but though he was well-beloved of God, yet he must taste of miseries and calamities, of which he had not a little; but he ever kept close unto God, who delivered him out of all his trouble.

Now some will say when they hear what poverty our Saviour suffered, and how Mary his mother was compelled to take a stable for lack of a better lodging, O what a wicked city was this! What a company of cruel people were these! But when we consider all things well, we shall find that we be even as wicked as they were: for are not we given now-a-days to covetousness, so that we regard not the poor, needy, and miserable people? Seek we not our own advantage, and despise and neglect the poor? Therefore if thou wilt cry out upon the Bethlemites, then cry out on thyself, for thou art as wicked, yea more wicked than they were. For the most part of Bethlehem knew nothing of our Saviour Christ that he was born; but we know it, therefore we are inexcusable. God hath sent unto us his preachers, which teach us the way to heaven, they shew us wherein standeth our redemption, they exhort us to godliness, to do good works, to be pitiful and liberal unto the poor, to help them, and comfort them: but what do we? Marry, we despise the preachers, we abhor their doctrine, and so consequently refuse Christ himself; for he saith, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me.'* This Christ himself speaketh by his preachers; therefore, as I said before, we need not to cry out against Bethlehem, but let us cry out on ourselves, for we are as ill in all points as they were.

This day on which our Saviour was come into the world, we were made one flesh with the Son of God.

* John xiii. 20.

O what a great honour is this unto us! which honour exceedeth the dignity of the angels. For though the angels are better in substance, yet we are better in the benefit; for Christ took not upon him the nature of angels, but he took our nature upon him. O what an exceeding thing is this! O how much are we bound to give him thanks for these his profound and inestimable benefits! We read a story, take it as you will, though it be not a true story; the devil came once into the church whilst the priest was saying mass, and when he was at these words, *Et homo factus est*,* the devil looked about him, and seeing no man kneel down or bow his knees, he struck one of them in the face, saying; What! will you not reverence him for this great benefit which he hath done unto you? I tell you, if he had taken upon him our nature, as he hath taken upon him yours, we would more reverence him than ye do. This story is prettily devised, for we should reverence him, we should honour him, and shew ourselves thankful for his inestimable benefits that he hath shewed unto us miserable wretched sinners in taking upon him our nature.

Now the same Jesus Christ who was born of the Virgin Mary, was very man except sin; for sin hath not defiled his flesh; for he was not begotten after the manner of other men, but by the power of the Holy Ghost; Mary was his very natural mother; and he was born to that end that he might deliver us from our sins and wickedness. To whom, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, be praise and honour everlastingly, world without end. *Amen.*

* That is, He was made man.

SERMON

S E R M O N XXXV.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

*Preached at Grimsthorpe on St. John Evangelist's
day, 1552.*

LUKE ii. 8—12.

And there was in the same region shepherds abiding in the field and watching their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the brightness of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. But the angel said unto them, Be not afraid, for behold I bring you tidings of great joy that shall come unto all the people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord; and take this for a sign, you shall find the child swaddled and laid in a manger, &c.

YESTERDAY I treated somewhat of the nativity of Christ our Saviour. Now let us a little better consider his poverty, which he suffered as soon as he was born. For the Evangelist saith here was no place in the inn, they had no room to refresh themselves; for the inn-keepers took only those which were able to pay for their good cheet, they would not meddle with such poor folk as Joseph and Mary his wife were. And here we may learn by the example of Joseph and Mary to take all things in good part, and to be content with poverty and miseries. Let us follow their example; we read not that they grudged or murmured against God, but they were content to take all things in good part, though they

could get never a lodging in the whole city ; so that they were fain to take a stable, there to repose themselves. You poor folk, comfort yourselves with this example ; though you have not houses after your mind, consider that Mary the mother of Christ lacked a lodging, and that in her greatest need. Therefore I would not have you in any wise to grudge or murmur because ye lack houses, for no doubt if we will be content with that that God fendeth unto us, and be thankful unto him, houses or no houses in this world, we shall be sure that we shall lack no houses in the other world ; but shall have everlasting habitations.

Now you hear how Mary the mother of Christ brought forth her Son into this world in a stable ; but here I would not have you to think that Mary was saved because she brought forth Christ ; no, not so ; she was saved because she believed in him. because she set her hope and confidence in him. There was once a woman when she heard our Saviour make a sermon, she thought him to be a wonderful man, she could no longer hold her tongue, but burst out into these words, saying, ' Blessed is the womb that hath borne thee, and happy are the teats that gave thee suck.' That is to say, happy is that woman that hath such a son. But what answer made our Saviour unto her ? ' But blessed are those that hear the word of God and keep the same ;' * For Mary was not justified nor saved because she was his natural mother ; for if she had not believed in him, she should never have obtained the felicity of heaven ; though she was a singular woman, yet if she had only staid at that, all had been to no purpose : but she believed on him to be the eternal Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, according to the promise made of God the Father himself in Paradise, namely, that ' the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head.' †

Now followeth in the text, ' And there were shepherds in the same region,' &c. I pray you to whom was the

* Luke xi. 27, 28.

† Gen. iii. 15.

nativity of Christ first opened, to the bishops or great lords which were at that time at Bethlehem? Or to those jolly damsels with their fardingals, with their roundabouts, or with their bracelets? No, no; they had so many hindrances to trim and dress themselves, that they could have no time to hear of the nativity of Christ; their minds were so occupied otherwise, that they were not allowed to hear of them. But his nativity was revealed first to the shepherds, and it was revealed unto them in the night-time, when every body was at rest, then they heard the joyful tidings of the Saviour of the world; for these shepherds were keeping their sheep in the night season from the wolf or other beasts, and from the fox; for the sheep in that country do lamb twice in the year, and therefore it was needful for the sheep to have a shepherd to keep them. And here note the diligence of these shepherds; for whether the sheep were their own, or whether they were servants, I cannot tell; for it is not expressed in the book; but it is most likely they were servants, and their masters had put them in trust to keep their sheep. Now if these shepherds had been deceitful fellows, that when their masters had put them in trust to keep their sheep, they had been drinking in the ale-house all night, as some of our servants do now-a-days, surely the angels had not appeared unto them to have told them this great joy and good tidings. And here all servants may learn by these shepherds to serve truly and diligently unto their masters; in what business soever they are set to do, let them be painful and diligent, like as Jacob was unto his master Laban. O what a painful, faithful and trusty man was he! He was day and night at his work, keeping his sheep truly, as he was put in trust to do; and when any chance happened that any thing was lost he made it good, and restored it again of his own. Such a servant was Joseph in Egypt to his master Potiphar; so likewise was Daniel unto his master the King. But I pray you where are these servants now-a-days? Indeed I fear me there be but very few such faithful servants.

Now these shepherds, I say, they watch the whole night, they attend upon their vocation, they keep their sheep, they run not hither and thither, spending the time in vain, and neglecting their office and calling; no, they did not so. I would wish that all clergymen, the curates, parsons, and vicars, the bishops, and all other spiritual persons, would learn this lesson by these poor shepherds; which is this, to abide by their flocks, and by their sheep, to tarry amongst them, to be careful over them, not to run hither and thither after their own pleasure, but to tarry by their benefices and feed their sheep with the food of God's word, and to keep hospitality, and so to feed them both soul and body. For I tell you these poor unlearned shepherds shall condemn many a great learned clerk; for these shepherds had but the care and charge over brute beasts, and yet were diligent to keep them, and to feed them, and the others have the care over God's lambs, which he bought with the death of his Son, and yet they are so careless, so negligent, so slothful over them; yea, and the most part intendeth not to feed the sheep, but they long to be fed of the sheep; they seek only their own pastimes, they care for no more. But what saith Christ to Peter? What said he? 'Peter, lovest thou me?' Peter made answer, Yes; 'Then feed my sheep.*' And so the third time he commanded Peter to feed his sheep. But our clergymen declare plainly that they love not Christ, because they feed not his flock. If they had earnest love to Christ, no doubt they would shew their love, they would feed his sheep.

The Evangelist saith, 'And there were in the same region shepherds abiding in the field; and, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them.' The angel of God was a preacher at that time, the people and audience were the shepherds; but they were greatly astonished, they knew not what God intended to do: but the angel said unto them, 'Fear not.' As who should say, ye have no cause to be afraid, when you know how the mat-

* John xxi. 15—18.

ter goeth, for I come to bring you word that the light is come into the world; for Christ is the light, the life, the resurrection, the way to heaven; when we believe in him the gates of hell shall not prevail against us.

The sermon of the angel was this, 'Lo!' when this word Lo is set in scripture, then ever followeth a great and weighty matter after it; and therefore he requireth audience and silence: he would have them to bear it away and note it well, what he would say unto them: 'I bring you tidings of great joy that shall come to all people.' I bring you good news, which pertaineth unto all the world, if they will receive it; but they that will not, if they refuse the offer of God, then they themselves are the cause of their own damnation.

'Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour.' This was a good angel, and he was already in the state of salvation; therefore he saith, unto *you* is born a Saviour; he saith not unto us, for the good angels of God are in a state of salvation already; therefore Christ suffered not for them, nor saved them, but us. As for the other angels, the angels of darkness, the devils, they are without hope of salvation; and therefore Christ suffered not for them, but only for mankind, which was lost by the craft of the old serpent the devil.

Farther, it is not enough to believe Christ to be a Saviour, but you must know what manner of Saviour he is; how far he saveth: and therefore you must understand that he was not such a Saviour as Moses was, which saved the people of Israel from hunger and thirst in the wilderness, but could not deliver them from everlasting death. Christ, our Saviour, is such a Saviour which saved us from eternal damnation, from the power of the devil, and all our enemies. The angel of God himself sheweth us what manner of Saviour Christ is, in the first of Matthew, saying, 'For he shall save his people from their sins.' So we must believe him to be such a Saviour which releases us from our sins, as well our original as actual wickedness. But the Papists make him but half a Saviour; for they think that they with their
good

good works must help him to save them half; so they blaspheme him, and take away his dignity, for he only hath merited, with his painful passion, to be a Saviour of the whole world, that is, to deliver all them that believe in him from their sins and wickedness.

Again, we must not only believe that he is a Saviour of mankind, but also that he is my Saviour and thy Saviour. I must have such a trust and hope in him, that he will save me from all my sin and wickedness; so every man must have a special faith. We must apply his passion unto us, every one to himself; for when it is not applied unto us with a special faith, it is to no purpose; for what advantage have I, when I believe Christ saved St. Peter and St. Paul, and other good men, and go no farther? Therefore I must have a special faith; I must believe that he saved them, and also will save me, and forgive me my sins.

Therefore let us study to believe in Christ; let us put all our hope, trust, and confidence, only in him; let us patch him with nothing; for, as I told you before, our merits are not able to deserve everlasting life; it is too precious a thing to be merited by man: it is his doing only, God hath given him unto us to be a deliverer, and to give us everlasting life. O what a joyful thing was this! What a comfortable thing is it! That we know now that neither the devil, hell, or any thing in heaven or earth, shall be able to condemn us when we believe in Christ.

Now the angel, after he had told them these good tidings, how the King of all Kings was born, gave them a sign or token whereby they should know him, and faith, 'Ye shall find the babe lying in a manger.' This was a goodly sign: indeed, if we consider the matter well, it was enough to make them astonished, and to cast down their belief, to tell them first of a great Saviour, and then to say, that they should find him in a stable, lying in a manger. But the wisdom of God is not according to the wisdom of this world; he went not about to please the foolish of this world, but his counsel was to deliver

the world by his Son, who should not come in riches and great pomp, but in poverty and rags ; his kingdom in this world should be a weak kingdom ; and so his disciples afterward were taken out of the lowest sort of men.

They were poor fishers and the most vile men in this world, as St. Paul saith, ‘ Outcasts of the world.’* And so shall all his disciples be, all they that will be saved by him, and especially the preachers of his holy word shall be *excrementa* ; they shall be outcasts ; when they will go about to reprove sin, as a preacher should do, as their office requireth, ‘ To rebuke the world of ‘ sin :’ I warrant you that man shall have little favour in this world. So, I say, God hath no respect of persons, though they be vile before this world and counted for nothing, yet he is content to work his will with them and through them, as here in these shepherds appeared : though they were poor, yet the angel opened unto them such things which were hidden from these glorious prelates and stubborn bishops, which in all time do but little good, for they disdain to preach Christ crucified.

Now to make an end : Consider what I have said, how Christ was born, in what poverty, and in what misery. Remember what manner of Saviour he is ; namely, a perfect Saviour, which saveth and healeth all our sorrows when we believe in him. I told you where you should seek him, namely, amongst the poor, where he will be found.

The Almighty God give us grace to live and believe so, that we may attain to that felicity which he hath promised by his Son our Saviour. To whom, with God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be honour world without end. *Amen.*

* I. Cor. iv. 13.

S E R M O N XXXVI.
THE WISE - MENS' OFFERING,

Preached at Grimsthorpe on Twelfth-day, 1553.

MATTHEW ii. 1, 2.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Jewry, in the time of Herod the King; behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

RIGHT Worshipful, you heard the gospel read before you, which gospel speaketh of the Epiphany of Christ,* how our Saviour was opened, by the providence of God to the Gentiles. Notwithstanding, I intend not to tarry long in that gospel to discourse of it; for if ye remember I promised you the last Sunday to speak of the Circumcision of our Saviour Christ. Now you know, at the same time, I did not perform my promise, because I had not time; therefore I intend now, by the help of God, to perform that which I then promised.† But because the gospel containeth so good matter, I cannot pass over it, but will shew you certain specialties which are contained in the same.

* Or manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, commonly called the TWELFTH DAY, on which the Eastern Magi, being guided by a star, paid their homage to the Saviour of the world: and because they are supposed to have come the twelfth after the day of the Nativity, it is therefore called Twelfth-day.

† The Sermon here alluded to (preached on the Sunday) is not in print.

The

The Evangelist Matthew in this gospel goeth about to prove, that Jesus was the Messias which was spoken of so much before-times by the Prophets ; and this he doth, by the place where he was born, namely, at Bethlehem, and also by the time, namely, when Herod was King over the Jews. But here be no Jews, therefore it needeth not to intreat of this matter.

Furthermore, here we shall note the simplicity and heartiness of these men, which came a great way out of their countries, where the Prophet Daniel had been before-times ; for, no doubt, but they had learned of Daniel that there should a Messias come. Therefore now when they perceived by the star that he was born, they are ready to forsake their countries, and come into Jewry, being a great way, to make inquisition for him ; and there go very simply to work, foreseeing no peril. They ask openly at Jerusalem for him, saying, ' Where ' is he that is born King of the Jews ? ' Here you must understand, that after Pompey the Great had subdued the Jews, in process of time, Herod had gotten the rule over them, by the means and appointment of the Emperor. Which Herod was not a Jew, but an Idumean ; a cruel, wicked, and forecasting man ; for he trusted not much to the Jews ; he was ever afraid he should be deprived of his kingdom. Now at that time, when this wicked man had the rule, these wise men came to the city, and inquired for the King of the Jews, and openly protested their faith which they had in Christ ; they were nothing afraid of Herod, for they had such a trust and confidence in God, that they were sure he would deliver them from his hands.

But worldly wise men will say, they were but fools to put themselves in such danger without need ; they might have asked for him secretly, so that the King might not have heard of it : such is the wisdom of those who have no faith nor confidence in God, they will not abide any peril for God's sake, they will seek all corners to hide themselves in, rather than they will profess God's word openly. I pray you note and mark well their words ;

they say, 'We are come to worship him;' to do him homage, to acknowledge him to be our Lord. Then again note the words of Herod; he saith unto them, 'Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I may come and worship him also.' Lo, hear what a fox this Herod was. Who can judge of man's words, except God which knoweth the hearts of men?

Note another thing, which is this; as soon as this was published, that these strangers were come, asking for the King of the Jews, 'Herod was troubled,' saith the text, 'and all Jerusalem with him.' This was a strange thing that Jerusalem should be troubled, which longed so long time for a King, for that Messias, for that Saviour. But they were ever as we are, they cared not for God's word, they sought nothing but their ease, and to be at rest; they cared not greatly for religion; they thought, if we receive him, we shall have trouble with him, therefore it is better for us to leave him, and to let him alone, rather than to disquiet ourselves: they were even right merchantmen, they sought nothing but to save their substance in this world, this was all they looked for; therefore they were troubled when they heard that Christ was born.

Now what doth Herod? Forsooth, he calleth all the bishops and learned men, and inquireth of them the time at the which Christ should be born. They were well feen in the law and the prophets after the letter, and therefore presently made answer unto him; saying, 'At Bethlehem Judah he shall be born;' for so it is written, 'And thou, Bethlehem Judah, thou art not the least concerning the Princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come the Captain that shall govern my people Israel.'* After Herod had heard this, he called the wise men, and bade them that they should 'go and search out the child, and when they had found him, they should bring him word again, that he might come and worship him also.' O what a fox is this! there hath

* Micah v. 2.

been many such foxes in England, especially in the time of persecution, which pretended great holiness, and zeal to God-ward with their mouth, but their hearts were poisoned with the cruelty of Herod.

Now as soon as they were out of the city, the star appeared unto them again, and went before them till it came to the place, where it stood still. But yet you must understand that our Saviour was born in a stable, but Joseph had gotten a house in process of time, so that they found him not in a stable. There be some learned men that think, that the wise-men came a year or two after his birth, for they came a great way; and when they had found him, they did homage unto him, and acknowledged him to be the Lord, and declared their faith they had in him, giving him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And here is to be noted the provision of God, there was nobody that we read of, which gave any thing unto him, yet God could stir up the hearts of those strangers to shew their liberality towards him.

But here, as I told you before, you must note God's provision, for now Mary and Joseph must be gone to Egypt: see what provision God made for them; he sent them gold and other treasures out of a far country. Again, how wonderfully God preserved those wise-men, which were going again to Herod, if they had not been admonished by the angel of God. Therefore learn here, that they that believe in God, and put their hope and trust in him, shall be provided for; God will not forget them.

But I will now leave that place of scripture, and return again to my promise, and to speak somewhat of circumcision, particularly of our Saviour Christ, and so make an end.

God Almighty made this promise unto Abraham, saying, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee.'* This was the promise of God, which promise was confirmed by that sign and outward token of circum-

* Gen. xvii. 7.

fion ; which was not only a mark or naked token whereby men might know a Jew from a Gentile, but it had a farther signification : like as our baptism is not only ordained for that cause, to know a Christian from a Turk or heathen, but it signifieth that we must wash away the old Adam, forsake and set aside all carnal lusts and desires, and put on Christ, receive him with a pure heart, and study to live and go forward in all goodness, according unto his will and commandment. So I say, at that time circumcision was not only an outward token, but had an inward signification ; namely, that the heart of man should be circumcised from all sin, and cleansed from all wickedness.

Now to come to the point. Circumcision at that time was a certain, sure, infallible, and effectual token of God's good-will towards them to whom it was given ; for as many as did believe the covenant of God, it did ascertain them of the good-will of God towards them, that they should be delivered out of all their troubles and adversities, that they should be sure of the help of God.

Now let us come to the circumcision of our Saviour Christ. A man might marvel how it came to pass that our Saviour would be circumcised, being, as he was indeed, Righteousness itself. What needed he to be circumcised ; for he was no sinner, nor had need that his faith should be confirmed by circumcision, being very God, and the natural Son of God ? Now the causes wherefore Christ our Saviour would be circumcised are these ; first, because he would be a testimony that the old law was God's law ; and for that time they were the very laws of God, and therefore he suffered himself to be circumcised, notwithstanding that he had no need of it. Another cause is, to be obedient unto common orders, therefore he would suffer rather to be circumcised, than to give occasion of confusion ; for the will of the Father was, that subjects should obey and keep orders. Now Christ himself giveth an example of this obedience, and no doubt it was a painful thing to be circumcised :

but

but our Saviour he was well content 'to suffer that great pain.

But these causes are not the chiefest ; but there hangeth more on it. St. Paul shewed the chief cause, saying, ' After that the fulness of time was come, God sent forth ' his Son made of a woman.'* That is the principal cause ; ' for when the fulness of time was come,' as God will have all things done in a convenient time, and the same time must be appointed by him, and not by us ; ' When the time was fully come, then God sent his Son ' made of a woman.' Made of a woman, he saith ; which signifieth that Christ took the substance of his body of the woman. In all things he was like unto other children, except that he had no human father, and was without sin, else he was very man, and was bound to the law. To what end ? ' That he might deliver us from the ' law, to the which we were bound ;' and that we might receive the right of the children of God by adoption, through God's goodness by his deserving, that we might have through his fulfilling of the law, remission of sins, and eternal life. These are the gifts, which he hath deserved with his keeping of the law.

Thus you see to what end he was circumcised, and wherefore he kept the law, namely, to deliver us from the condemnation of it ; for if he had not kept the law, the law had such power, that it would have condemned us all : for so it is written, ' Cursed be he that abideth ' not by all that which is written in the law.'† So that the least cogitation that we have against the law of God, bringeth this curse upon our heads ; so that there was never man, nor shall be one, that could remedy himself by this law ; for it is spiritual, it may not be fulfilled but by the spirit. It requireth us to be clean from all spots of sin, from all ill thoughts, words, and deeds ; but we be carnal, and as St. Paul saith, ' sold under sin and wickedness.'‡ Therefore he concludeth thus ; ' And by the ' works of the law no man can be justified.'§ For you

* Gal. iv. 4, 5. † Ib. iii. 10. ‡ Rom. vii. 14. § Ib. iii. 20.
must

must consider the works of the law, how they ought to be done, and again how we do them. As Christ did them, they merit, for he did them perfectly, as they ought to be done; but as we do them, they condemn, and yet the lack is not in the law, but in us. The law of itself is holy and good, but we are not able to keep it, and therefore we must seek our righteousness, not in the law, but in Christ, which hath fulfilled the same, and given us freely his fulfilling.

And this is the chiefest cause wherefore Christ would fulfil the law. But all the papists think themselves to be saved by the law, and I myself have been of that dangerous, perilous, and damnable opinion, till I was thirty years of age, so long I walked in darkness, and in the shadow of death. And no doubt, he that departeth out of this world in that opinion, he shall never come to heaven; for when we will consider the works of the law, which the law requireth, and again, how we do them, we shall find that we may not be justified by our doings: for the flesh reigneth in us, it beareth rule and hindereth the spirit, and so we never fulfil the law. Certain it is, that they that believe in Christ have the Holy Ghost which ruleth and governeth them; yet for all that, there be a great many deficiencies in them, so that if they would go about to be saved by their works, they should come too short, for their works are not able to answer the requests of the law. And so Christ should be but a judge, which should give to every one according to his merits, and should not deserve for us. If we had no other help but that, then we should go all to the devil; but God the Everlasting be praised, we have a remedy and a sure helper, Christ, the Son of the living God, hath fulfilled the law for us, to deliver us from sin. Such is the office of Christ, to deliver us from the law, and the wrath of it: the law requireth a perfect righteousness, and holiness, now all they that believe in Christ, they are holy and righteous, for he hath fulfilled the law for us which believe in him; we be reputed just through faith in Christ. What requireth the law of us? Marry, righteousness and holiness:

holiness ; this we have, we are righteous ; but how ? not by our works, for our works are not able to make us just, and deliver us from our sins, but we are just by this, that our sins are pardoned unto us, through the faith which we have in Christ our Saviour ; for he, through his fulfilling of the law, took away the curse of the law from our heads.

I desire you in the reverence of God to bear away this one sentence which I will now speak unto you, for it shall be a good stay for you against the temptations of the devil ; the sentence is this, ' That the law could not 'do'* (for it was hindered by the flesh) what can the law do when he hath no let ? Marry, it can justify ; but ' by the infirmity of our flesh,' man was not able to do it, the lack was in us ; for we are wicked, and the law is holy and good. Now that which we lacked, that same hath God fulfilled and supplied, in that he hath sent his Son to supply that which man's works could not do, and with his fulfilling of the law, and painful death, he merited, that as many as believe in him, though they had done all the sins of the world, yet shall they not be damned, but are righteous before the face of God, believing in Christ ; so that remission of sins, and everlasting life, may be sought no where else but only in Christ, ' He ' that spared not his only Son, but gave him for us, why ' should he not with him give us all things also ?'†

By this text it appeareth, that he which hath Christ hath all things ; he hath Christ's fulfilling of the law, he hath remission of his sins, and so consequently everlasting life. Is not this a comfort ? What greater consolation, comfort, and hearts-ease can there be in heaven and earth, than this, namely, to be sure of the remission of thy sins, and that Christ bound himself unto the law, to the end that he might fulfil it to the uttermost.

Now I must needs speak a word or two of good works, lest peradventure some of you be offended with me. I told you before wherein standeth our righteousness, namely

* Rom. viii. 3.

† Ib. ver. 32.

in this, that our unrighteousness is forgiven us ; for we must needs confess, that the best works that we do, have need of remission of sins, and so are not meritorious, for they be not perfect as they ought to be ; and therefore we live on borrowing, we have no proper righteousness of our own ; but we borrow, that is to say, we take the righteousness of Christ, which he offered freely to as many as believe in him. And this treasure of his righteousness is not wasted or spent, he hath enough for all the world, yea, if there were a thousand worlds. Therefore when we have been wicked, let us be sorry for our wickedness, and come to Christ, and call for forgiveness, and then take a good earnest purpose to leave sin. But I pray you note this, we must first be made good, before we can do good. We must first be made just, before our works please God ; for when we are justified by faith in Christ, and are made good by him, then cometh our duty, that is, to do good works, to make a declaration of our thankfulness.

In times past we were wont to run hither and thither, to this saint, and to that saint, but it is all but fig-leaves what man can do. Therefore let us stick to Christ, which is the right, perfect, and absolute Saviour, and able to deliver us from all our sins ; and not only able to do it, but also willing. He offereth himself unto us, therefore, I say, let us believe in him, and afterward shew our thankfulness by an honest conversation and living ; so that his holy name may be praised amongst us, and they that know him not as yet, may more willingly be brought to the knowledge of him through our godly conversation. The Almighty God, whose kingdom is everlasting, give us his grace to do well. To whom, with God the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and ever, world without end. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XXXVII.

JOSEPH AND MARY AT JERUSALEM.

Preached on the first Sunday after the Epiphany, 1553.

LUKE ii. 42.

*And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem,
after the custom of the feast, &c.*

HERE in this gospel is to be noted, how Mary the mother of our Saviour Christ went to Jerusalem, having her husband, and the child Jesus, who was but twelve years of age, in her company, &c. But before I come to this gospel, I will rehearse unto you something which I took in hand last holy-day; where I, taking occasion of the gospel that was read the same day, made mention how Jesus the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, was born in Bethlehem, and how God opened his birth unto the Gentiles, &c. The last holy-day I had no time to treat of this matter fully, and therefore I intend to speak somewhat of it at this time. And first of this word Jesus, what it is.

The Evangelist saith here, 'When Jesus was born.' What is Jesus? Jesus is an Hebrew word, and signifieth in our English tongue a Saviour or Redeemer. This title and name, TO SAVE, pertaineth properly and principally unto him; for he saveth us, else we had been lost for ever; notwithstanding, the name of Saviour is used in common speech, as the King is called a Saviour, for he saveth his subjects from all danger and harm that may ensue of the enemies. Likewise the phyfician is accounted a Saviour, for he saveth the sick man from the danger of his disease with good and wholesome medicines; so fathers

and mothers are Saviours, for they save their children from bodily harm that may happen unto them. But all this is not a perfect saving; for what availeth it to be saved from sickness, calamities, and oppression, when we shall be condemned after our death both body and soul for ever, to remain with the devil and his angels? We must therefore come to Jesus, who is the right and true Saviour: 'And he it is that hath saved us from sin.' Whom hath he saved? His people. Who are his people? All that believe in him, and put their whole trust in him, and those that seek help and salvation at his hands, all such are his people. The other shall be cast out as infidels into everlasting damnation; not for lack of salvation, but for infidelity and lack of faith, which is the only cause of their damnation.

He saved us, from what? Even from sin. Now when he saved us from sin, then he saved us from the wrath of God, from affliction and calamities, from hell and death, and from damnation and everlasting pain; for sin is the cause and fountain of all mischief. Take away sin, then all other calamities wherein mankind is wrapped are taken away, and dispersed. But how doth he save us from sin? In this manner, that sin shall not condemn us, sin shall not have the victory over us. He saved us not so, that we should be without sin, that no sin should be left in our hearts; for all manner of imperfections remain in us, yea in the best of us, so that if God should enter into judgement with us, we should be damned. Therefore he saved us not so from sin, in taking clean away the same from us, that we should no more be inclined to it, but rather the power and strength of the same: so also he saved us from other calamities, not taking the same clean away, but rather the power of them; that no calamity nor misery should be able to hurt us that are in Christ Jesus. And likewise he saved us from death, not that we should not die, but that death should have no victory over us, nor condemn us; but rather be a way and entrance into salvation and everlasting life; for death is a gate to enter into everlasting life.

The

The Papists, which are the very enemies of Christ, make him to be a Saviour after their own fancy, and not after the word of God, wherein he declareth himself, and sets out and openeth his mind unto us. They follow, I say, not the scripture, but their own inventions, and therefore they make him a Saviour after this fashion. They consider how there shall be after the general resurrection a general judgement, where all mankind shall be gathered together to receive their judgement, then shall Christ, say the Papists, sit as a judge, having power over heaven and earth; and all those that have done well in this world, and have stedfastly prayed upon their beads, and have gone a pilgrimage, &c. and so with their good works have deserved heaven and everlasting life, those shall be received of Christ, and admitted to everlasting salvation: as for the other, that have not merited everlasting life, they shall be cast into everlasting darkness. And so it appeareth that they esteem our Saviour not to be a redeemer, but only a judge, which shall give sentence over the wicked to go into everlasting fire, and the good he will call to everlasting felicity.

And this is the opinion of the Papists as concerning our Saviour, which opinion is most abominable in the sight of God: for it diminisheth the passion of Christ, it taketh away the power and strength of the same, it defileth the honour and glory of Christ, it forsaketh and denieth Christ and all his benefits; for if we shall be judged after our own deservings, we shall be damned everlastingly. Therefore learn here every good Christian to abhor this most detestable and dangerous poison of the Papists, which go about to thrust Christ out of his seat; learn here, I say, to leave all Papistry, and to stick only to the word of God, which teacheth thee that Christ is not only a judge, but a justifier, a giver of salvation, and a taker away of sin; for he purchased our salvation through his painful death, and we receive the same through believing in him; as St. Paul teacheth us, saying, 'Freely you are justified through grace.'* In these

* Rom. iii. 24.

words of St. Paul, all merits and estimation of works are excluded and clean taken away: for if it were for our works' sake, then it were not freely; but St. Paul faith freely. Whether will you now believe St. Paul or the Papists?

But if any of you will ask now, How shall I come by my salvation? How shall I get everlasting life? I answer, if you believe with an unfeigned heart that Jesus Christ the Son of God came into the world and took upon him our flesh of the Virgin Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate, in the city of Jerusalem, the most painful death and passion upon the cross, and was hanged between two thieves for our sins' sake, fulfilling the law for us to the uttermost, giving us freely as a gift his fulfilling to be ours; so that we are now fulfillers of the law by his fulfilling: so that the law may not condemn us, for he hath fulfilled it, that we believing in him are fulfillers of the law, and just before the face of God; for Christ with his passion hath deserved, that all that believe in him shall be saved, not through their own good works, but through his passion.

Wherefore we must be justified, not through our good works, but through the passion of Christ, and so live by a free justification and righteousness in Christ Jesus. Whosoever thus believeth, mistrusting himself and his own doings, and trusting in the merits of Christ, he shall get the victory over death, the devil, and hell; so that they shall not hurt him, neither all their powers be able to stand against any of those which are in Christ Jesus. Therefore when thou art in sickness, and feelest that the end of thy bodily life approacheth, and that the devil with his assaults is coming to tempt thee, and so to bring everlasting confusion, then withstand him strongly in faith; namely, when he bringeth thee low, for he is an old doctor, and very well learned in the scripture, as it appeareth in the fourth chapter of Matthew, where he reasoned with Christ. So will he reason with thee, saying, 'Sir, it is written in the law, that all those which 'have not fulfilled the law to the uttermost, shall be condemned. Now thou hast not fulfilled it, but hast been
'wicked,

‘wicked, and a transgressor of it; thou art mine; and
 ‘therefore thou shalt go to hell, and there be punished
 ‘world without end.’ Against such temptations and as-
 saults of the devil we must fight on this wise, and answer,
 ‘I acknowledge myself to be a sinner most miserable and
 ‘filthy in the sight of God, and therefore as of myself I
 ‘should be damned according to this saying; but there is
 ‘one thing yet behind, that is this, I know and believe
 ‘without all doubt, that God hath sent his Son into the
 ‘world, who suffered a most painful and shameful death
 ‘for me, and fulfilled the law wherewith thou wouldest
 ‘condemn me; yea, he hath given me as a gift his ful-
 ‘filling, so that I am now reckoned a fulfiller of the
 ‘law before God; therefore, avoid, thou most cruel ene-
 ‘my, avoid; for I know that my Redeemer liveth, which
 ‘hath taken away all my sin and wickedness, and set me
 ‘at unity with God his heavenly Father, and made me
 ‘a lawful inheritor of everlasting life.’

Whoso in such wise fighteth with the devil, shall have the victory, for he is not able to stand against Christ; and it appeareth throughout all the scripture most plainly and manifestly, that the power of the devil is vanquished, when the word of God is used against him: therefore let us learn to know God and his word, that we may withstand this horrible enemy, knowing that we shall have the victory through Christ our Saviour, in whom and by whom God is pleased with us, and taketh in good part all our doings.

We have a common saying amongst us, ‘Every thing
 ‘is as it is taken.’ We read of King Henry VII. at a
 time as he was served with a cup of drink, a gentleman
 that brought the cup, in making obeisance the cover fell
 to the ground; the King seeing his folly saith, ‘Sir, is
 ‘this well done?’ ‘Yea, Sir,’ said he, ‘if your Majesty
 ‘take it well.’ With this pretty answer the King was
 pacified. So it is with us as touching our salvation.
 Our works are imperfect, but God taketh the same well
 for Christ’s sake; he will not impute unto us the imper-
 fection of our works, for all our imperfections and sins
 are

are drowned in the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and whosoever believeth the same stedfastly shall not perish.

Farther: In this gospel is to be noted, that Herod hearing the wise men were returned another way into their country, sent by-and-by his guard and killed all the children that were two years of age and under at Bethlehem, and in the country: but for all his cruelty, God was able to preserve Christ, that he should not be slain amongst these children; therefore the angel giveth Joseph warning that he should go into Egypt.

Here learn to trust in God, for 'Against the Almighty 'prevaileth no counsel.' This Herod thought himself wiser than God and the whole world; yet for all that he was much deceived, for he could neither destroy the wise men nor Christ with all his wit and counsel; 'the Lord 'that sitteth above laughed him to scorn;' he brought his counsel to nought, and he delivered them out of his hands; so undoubtedly he will do with us. He will deliver us out of all our troubles, and from all our enemies whensoever they shall oppress us, if we put but our trust in him.

Now after they were departed from Herod, they go their way seeking the child; and as soon as they came out of the city they see the star, which guided them until they came unto the house where Jesus was, with his mother and Joseph his father-in-law. And when these men came thither, what did they? They worshipped him. Note here; they worshipped him, saith the Evangelist: here is confounded and overthrown the foolish opinion and doctrine of the Papists, which would have us to worship a creature before the Creator, Mary before her son. These wise men do not so; they worship not Mary: wherefore? Because God only is to be worshipped: but Mary is not God; therefore they worship not her, but him, which is the very natural Son of God, yea God himself.

Thus much I was minded to tell you of this gospel: now let us return to the gospel of this day, wherein I will

will note two or three short notes ; for I will not trouble you long, because the time is much spent.

‘ And when he was twelve years old,’ &c. God Almighty had commanded in his law,* that all the males should come together three times in the year, for these three causes. The first was, that they should learn to trust in God, and not in their own strength : and it was a great matter unto them to leave the land void ; as if we Englishmen had commandment to come all to London, and leave our country, were it not to be feared that the country should be hurt either by the Scots † or Frenchmen in our absence ? Surely I think it were very dangerous ; for at that time the Jews had great and mortal enemies round about them ; yet God commanded them to leave the land void : as who would say, Come you together after my commandment, and let me alone with your enemies, I will keep them from you that they shall not hurt you. The second cause was, that they should learn the law and commandments of God ; for there was the chief temple of the Jews, and all the spirituality of the whole land were there gathered together, and taught the people the law, and how they should walk before God. The third cause was for acquaintance sake, for God would have them knit together in earnest love and charity ; and that they that dwelled on the one side of the land might be acquainted with them that dwelled on the other side, so that there might be a perfect love between them ; for God hateth nothing more than discord.

Now at this time Mary went with her husband Joseph ; belike she was desirous to hear the word of God, which made her take so great a journey in hand, for she was not commanded by the law to be there, for women were at their liberty to go or not. Here note the painfulness of Mary, that she was content to go so great a journey for God’s sake. I fear this journey of hers will condemn a great many of us, who will not go out of the door to hear God’s word.

* Deut. xvi. 16.

† See the note, page 116.

Joseph and Mary with all their neighbours were at Jerusalem; and after they had done their business they came home again, Mary in the company of other women, and Joseph her husband in the company of men; but Jesus the child was left behind, for Mary thought he was with his father, and Joseph thought he was with his mother. At night when they were met together, she asked him, and he asked her for the child; for before they were not aware that they had lost him. O what sorrow and tribulation rose then in their hearts! I think no tongue can shew what pain and sorrow this mother felt in her heart for the loss of her child; for she thought thus, God hath rejected me, and therefore hath taken my son from me, I shall no more find him; alas! that ever I was born, that I should lose my son, whom I heard say should be the Saviour of the world. This Saviour is lost now through my negligence and slothfulness: what shall I do? Where shall I seek him?—In this great heaviness she turned back again to Jerusalem, inquiring for him by the way amongst their friends and acquaintance: but he could neither be heard of nor found until they came to Jerusalem, where they found him amongst the doctors and learned men, arguing with them, and opposing them.

After that they found him, Mary beginneth to chide him, saying, 'Son, why hast thou done this unto us?' Here she speaketh like a mother, and is very quick with him; but he made her as quick an answer, saying, 'Know ye not that I must do the business of my Father?' &c. We learn here how far forth children are bound to obey their parents, namely, so far as the same may stand with godliness. If they will have us go farther, and pluck us from true religion and the serving of God, make them this answer, 'We ought rather to obey God than men.' Here not only children may learn, but subjects and servants, to obey their king and masters, so far as it may stand with God's pleasure, and farther to go we ought not.

The

The child went home with them, and was obedient to them, although partly he had signified to them wherefore he was sent into the world; namely, to teach men the way to heaven: yet he remained with them in this obedience from this time, being of the age of twelve years, unto the age of thirty years; and in this mean time (as it is to be thought) he exercised his father's occupation, which was a carpenter. This is a wonderful thing, that the Saviour of the world, and the King above all kings, was not ashamed to labour, yea, and to use so simple an occupation. Here he did sanctify all manner of occupations, exhorting and teaching us by this example every man to follow and keep the state whereunto God hath called him, and then we shall have living enough in this world, doing well and after his pleasure, and in the world to come life everlasting; which Christ by his death and passion hath deserved for us. To whom, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XXXVIII.

THE MARRIAGE AT CANA.

Preached on the second Sunday after Epiphany, 1553.

JOHN ii. 1—7.

And upon the third day there was a marriage in Cana, a city of Galilee, and Mary the mother of Jesus was there, &c.

THE third day, that was the third day after he came into Galilee, for before he was in Jewry, and now was come into Galilee. And there was a marriage the third day after his coming, and Mary his mother was present, and as it was most like, she was there as an helper, for she was no bidden guest, but Christ was called unto it with his disciples, being thirty years of age, at which time he began to preach the kingdom of God; but as yet he had done no miracles, except that which he did when he was twelve years of age, that was, he disputed in the temple with the doctors, which certainly was a miracle; but this now was the first that he did after his preaching. And now being a preacher he beginneth to confirm all his doctrine with miracles, to get himself authority, and to allure his audience to believe; and therefore he set forth his power by miracles.

And here peradventure some will say, how happeneth it that there are no miracles done in these days by such as are preachers of the word of God? I answer, the word of God is already confirmed by miracles, partly by Christ himself, and partly by the apostles and saints. Therefore they which now preach the same word, need no miracles
for

for the confirmation thereof, for the same is sufficiently confirmed already : now to the gospel.

‘ There was a marriage,’ saith the Evangelist. This is a comfortable place for all married folks ; for it here appeareth that marriage is a most honourable and acceptable thing in the sight of God, yea, God Almighty himself is the author of it, as the scripture saith, ‘ Those ‘ that God hath joined together, man shall not separate ;’* meaning, that all those that come together by the appointment of God, and his holy institution, such shall not man separate, nor put asunder. Here all those which go about marriage, may learn to examine their consciences, and to be sure that it is the pleasure and will of God, that man and wife should marry and dwell together. And they which are married already may comfort themselves in all afflictions ; such may comfort themselves with the word of God, and think in their hearts and say, O God, thou hast brought us together in this estate of matrimony, it was thy ordinance and pleasure that we should join together ; now, therefore, be merciful unto us, forsake us not which live in thy ordinance and after thy commandments ; pour thy spirit into our hearts, that we may bear and suffer all these miseries which thou layest upon our necks !

Here learn to abhor the abominable opinions of the Papists, which hold that marriage is not an holy thing, and that the ministers of the word of God be defiled through marriage if they enter into the same ; which is an abominable doctrine, and clean against God and his word. St. Paul seeing this before-hand in the spirit saith, ‘ In the latter times there shall come deceivers, and ‘ false teachers, which should teach the doctrine of devils, ‘ forbidding marriage.’† Which prophesy of St. Paul is verified now in this our time in the Papists, for they say and teach that marriage is not lawful to every man, despising also the ordinance of God. Therefore their doctrine may be called, as it is indeed, the doctrine of the devil.

* Matt. xix. 6.

† I. Tim. iv. 3.

Against which doctrine St. Paul made a proclamation, saying, ' Marriage is lawful, honourable, and godly ' among all men, and as for adulterers and fornicators, ' God shall judge them.'* This St. Paul speaketh by occasion, seeing in spirit that there would come such as would pervert the ordinance of God, and say that marriage is unholy, and that a man may not marry in Lent, for it is a holy time; as though marriage were unholy: but here ye may see it is the very ordinance of God, and is commended by Christ himself; for he cometh unto it, and with his presence he sanctifieth it. And not only that, but he did a miracle at this marriage, whereby he confirmed marriage to be good, holy, and acceptable before God. Therefore all those that go about marriage ought to know that it is good, holy, and lawful before God; only thus I admonish you, have a respect to God-ward; that is to say, endeavour yourself so, that God may be with you at your marriage, and that Christ be one of our guests, for if he be there, you shall have no lack of any thing. And to signify that he would help them that lacked, he did a miracle at this marriage, he remedied what lacked; wine lacked, and forthwith he turned water into wine.

Here note that it is lawful for poor men sometimes to be merry, especially at a marriage; for these were poor men, yet they had wine at the marriage, whereas their common drink was but water; but now at the wedding they had wine, because they might be merry at the solemnity of God's ordinance; which as it is lawful, so let it be done honestly and godly, as becometh Christian men.

Farther we learn here that the saints in heaven have been sinners; for after St. Augustin's mind, Mary was here moved with vain glory, and went about to provoke Christ to do some new thing, not seeking the honour of God, but her own glory, that it might be said she had a son that could do this and that. Also let us here learn

* Heb. xiii. 4.

by the mother of Christ, whither we shall run for help, when we are in necessity and distress. Mary perceived that there was lack of wine, and had therefore pity over her poor friends; now in this distress, whither runneth she for her help, even to Christ himself. Then let us follow her example; art thou poor? Run to Christ, and call upon God in the name of Christ; ask forgiveness of thy sins in his name and God will hear thee, and grant thy petition, for he hath promised all that come to him in the name of Christ, shall lack nothing, neither shall they be rejected of him.

Here also note farther, the great charity that was in Mary, the mother of Christ, which prayed for her friends, namely, in the time of their lack and necessity, saying, 'They have no wine:' as who should say, they are poor honest folks, and have here an honest company at their marriage, now they lack wine, I pray you help. She was not long in bibble-babble, with saying she wist not what, but faith at one word, help, for there is need.

Christ answered, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' Here appeareth the great faith that Mary had in our Saviour Jesus Christ her Son; for notwithstanding she had received of him this hard and sharp answer, yet she despaired not, but commanded the servants to do all that he should command them. Here let us learn not to despair in the help of God, though we be not heard and obtain our petition at the first; as many do which call upon God a day or two, and obtain not, then they despair and give over.

'Woman!' What a thing was this, to call his mother 'Woman!' These words might not only sound to the dishonesty of his mother, but also to his own rebuke; for it might be judged, that he was one that neither loved nor revered his mother, in calling her woman. To this objection this answer may be made; Christ, as long as he was under the government of his mother, did all his duty as appertained unto him, but now being a preacher, and serving in the common ministry, he is not bound to be ruled by his mother; neither did it appertain to his
mother,

mother, either to appoint him what he should do, or when he should do it, and therefore this seemed a great presumption in her, and therefore he answered her so sharply.*

‘Six water-pots of stone,’ &c. The six pots were filled with water to wash withal, for the Jews used much washing, as when they went to market, coming home they washed themselves, lest they should be defiled; so this water was set there, partly to wash, and partly to drink. And here we may learn, that when Christ is bidden to our marriage, there shall lack nothing, for he will turn the water into wine.

Also, we may learn here by this marriage, to keep a good order in our business, as one appointed had the oversight of all, so we may not let every body be rulers; but to keep good order in all our business, let some rule, and some be ruled.

‘They filled them up to the brim,’ &c. This was all done that the miracle might be known, not seeking his own honour and glory, but rather the honour and glory of God his Father, and our wealth and salvation; and to allure and bring us to have faith in him, and to teach us to put our trust in him, and also to bring us from carefulness of this life, unto the consideration of the life to come; this is a comfortable story. This miracle of our Saviour, whereby he sheweth that whosoever believeth and trusteth in him, shall not lack any thing; for as a learned man saith, ‘If a labouring man should see all that he gathereth and spendeth in a year in a chest, it would not find him half a year; yet it findeth him, God multiplieth it day by day, and so he will do unto all them that believe and trust in him.’

Now you have heard in this gospel, beside other good matters, of marriage, how holy a thing it is, how it is the ordinance of God himself: also how we shall take mar-

* It does not appear however that the original term [*Γυναικίς*] implied any disrespect: the politest Greek writers use it as we do, *Madam*. See *Blackwall's Sac. Classics*, vol. i. pag. 206.

riage in hand, namely, call Christ unto it, and let him be one of the guests, and then all things will be well ; for without him, nothing will be as it ought. Marriage is like a school-house, where you shall have occasion of patience and occasion of love. Now except Christ be in this school-house of marriage, you cannot be patient in trouble, neither can you truly love, neither can you do any thing acceptable unto God. Wherefore, whosoever will take in hand marriage, let him take it so in hand that it may redound to the honour and glory of God ; then will he be there, and turn the water into wine ; that is to say, he will mitigate and assuage all our calamities and miseries with his spirit and grace ; so that no adversity shall hurt us in this world, and in the world to come we shall have life everlasting ; which God the Father grant us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, to whom, with Himself, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XXXIX.

THE LEPER CLEANSED.

Preached on the third Sunday after Epiphany, 1553.

MATT. viii. 1, 2, 3.

When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

THIS is a notable miracle, and a most comfortable history, which though it were done upon a leper only, yet the doctrine of the same appertaineth to us, and to all men, and so shall it do unto the end of the world. For St. Paul saith, 'Whatsoever is written, is written for our instruction;' therefore, if we will consider and ponder this story well, we shall find much matter in it to our great comfort and edifying.

'When he was come down,' &c. He had been upon the mountain making a sermon, which is contained in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of this Evangelist, which sermon is very notable, and containeth the sum of a Christian man's life. At the which sermon the people were greatly astonished, and much marvelled: whereby you may note the strength and efficacy of the word of God. And in this gospel is especially to be noted, the great love and kindness of our Saviour toward mankind, which

which first preached unto the people, and taught them the way unto everlasting life, and then came down and healed the diseased man; that is, he first succoureth our souls, and afterwards comforteth our bodies.

There cometh a leper unto him, saying, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst help me.' This leper took Christ to be a Saviour, and therefore he cometh unto him for help. So let us come unto him, for he is the Saviour of mankind, and he is the only helper that succoureth both our bodies and souls. He saveth our souls by his word, if when we hear the same we believe it. The salvation of our bodies shall appear at the last day, where soul and body shall come together, and there shall be rewarded. So that if the soul be saved, the body is saved, for soul and body shall go together; and so he saveth both our bodies and souls. Note here also the behaviour of this leper, for by his example the best doctor in divinity need not to be ashamed to learn; for in him appeareth a marvellous strong faith and confidence that he had in Christ; for he doubted not but that Christ was able to help him; neither mistrusted he his goodness and mercy: therefore faith moved him to come to Christ, and to desire help of him.

And note here also the love and great charity of our Saviour Christ, which first he shewed to the whole multitude, in teaching them so earnestly and diligently the way to everlasting life; and then he extended his great compassion and mercy unto this leper, whom all men abhorred, because of his uncleanness. But Christ abhorred him not; yea, he is content not only to hear his request, and to talk with him, but also laid his hands upon his filthy body. O how great a kindness was this! O what a wonderful thing is this, that the King of all kings talketh here most familiarly with a filthy leper! O what profound and incomprehensible love beareth he unto us! It is esteemed a great thing when a King vouchsafeth to talk with a poor man, being one of his subjects; what a great thing then is it, that the King of all kings, yea, the ruler of heaven and earth, talketh with a poor man,

heareth his request, and mercifully granteth the same? This Evangelist saith, 'Behold, there came a leper and worshipped him;' but another Evangelist saith, 'He fell upon his knees before him.'* These are gestures and behaviours, which signify a reverence done unto him, or a subjection, or submission.

For although our Saviour went like a poor man, yet this leper had conceived such a faith and trust in him, that he had no respect of his outward appearance, but followed his faith, which faith told him that this was the Saviour: therefore he set aside all outward shew, and came with great reverence unto him, desiring his help. And here you may learn good manners; for it is a good sight, and very commendable, and is also the commandment of God, that we should give honour to those to whom honour belongeth; especially preachers ought to be revered, and that for their office sake, for they are the officers of God. And such as are proud persons may be ashamed by this leper; for this is certain and true, that a proud heart prayeth never well, and therefore is hated before God. Wherefore, amongst other vices, beware of pride; for what was the cause that Lucifer was cast down from heaven into hell? Pride only was the cause of it. Therefore St. Augustine hath a pretty saying, 'Whensoever thou seest a proud man, doubt not but he is the son of the devil.' Let us learn therefore by this leper, to have a humble and meek spirit.

Moreover, this man was a leper and a miserable man, one despised of all men, and an outcast. For it was commanded in the law of God, that no man should keep company with a leper; therefore it appeareth that he was in great misery: But what doth he? Whither runneth he for help and succour? Even to Christ, to him only he runneth; not to witches or forcerers, as ungodly men do; but he seeketh for comfort of our Saviour. Now when you are in distress, in misery, in sickness, in poverty, or any other calamity, follow the example of this

* Mark i. 40.

leper, run to Christ, seek help and comfort only at his hands, and then thou shalt be delivered and made safe, like as he was delivered after he came to Christ.

But what brought he with him? Even his faith: he believed that Christ was able to help him, and therefore according to his faith it happened unto him. Then it shall be necessary for thee to bring faith with thee, for without faith thou canst get nothing at his hands; bring therefore, I say, faith with thee: believe that he is able to help thee, and that he is merciful and will help thee. And when thou comest furnished with such a faith, surely thou shalt be heard; thou shalt find him a loving Father, and a faithful Friend, and a Redeemer of thee out of all tribulation. For faith is like a hand wherewith we receive the benefits of God; and except we take his benefits with the hand of faith, we shall never have them.

Here in this gospel you may learn the right use of scripture, for when you shall hear and read such stories as this is, you must not think that such stories and acts done by our Saviour are but temporal, but you must consider that they are done for our sake, and for our instruction and teaching. Therefore, when you hear such stories, you must consider the eternal things which are set before your eyes by such stories, and so we must apply them to ourselves. As for example, here is a leper, and he called upon Christ with a good faith, and was healed. You will say, what is that unto us? Even as he was a leper in his body, so are we lepers in our souls; he was unclean in his body, and we are unclean in our souls; he was healed by believing in Christ, so we must be healed by him, or else perish eternally. Therefore if thou wilt not perish, then call upon him as this leper did, and thou shalt be holpen and cleansed of thy leprosy; that is, from all thy sin. So, I say, we must apply the scriptures unto us, and take out something to strengthen our faith withal, and to edify ourselves with God's word.

Now note here how this man came; see how humbly and meekly he cometh, and what a good and strong faith he had in Christ, which faith appeared by his coming:

for if he had been without faith, he would not have come unto him, because our Saviour kept but a mean estate, not a King's court; he was poor, and therefore the more despised of the unbelievers: but this man believed, and therefore he came unto him. Learn therefore by this example, to go to Christ in what affliction soever we be; let us run to him, and pray unto God for his sake; acknowledge him, put him before thee, and beware that thou call not upon any creature or saint, for this is a great wickedness before God, in praying to saints; for with the saints we have nothing to do, but to keep in memory and follow their godly life, and righteous living. But our prayer must be made unto Christ only, like as this man doth here in this gospel.

But what was this man's prayer? Did he pray upon his beads, and say our Lady's Psalter? No, no; he was never brought up in any such popish schools. What said he? 'If thou wilt, O Lord, thou canst make me clean, and put away my disease.' This is but a short prayer, but it containeth much; for first it teacheth how we should pray unto God, namely, conditionally in our outward and bodily things, that is to say, when it pleaseth him; and so did our Saviour himself pray to his heavenly Father, saying, 'If thou wilt, Father, let this cup pass from me.'* So we should do, when we are in any manner of tribulation or sickness, that is, pray unto God conditionally, saying, O Lord God, if it please thee, and if it may stand with thy honour and glory, and the salvation of my soul, help and deliver me: we must put the matter to him, for he knoweth best what is good for us. Peradventure he seeth, that if we should be without affliction, we should be wanton, wicked, and proud, and so sin against him, and damn our souls; and then it were better for us to be in sickness than in health. Therefore we must desire health, if it please him; that is to say, when it appertaineth to our salvation, or else it were a thousand times better to be sick still, than to be out of

* Matt. xxvi. 39.

sickness, and fall from God and all goodness; he therefore knoweth best what is good for us.

Secondly, this prayer expresseth the faith that this poor man had in Christ, for he saith, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst help me.' If thou wilt, saith he, noting him to be omnipotent and almighty. And in these words he expresseth the divinity of Christ our Saviour, 'If thou wilt.' He believeth him to be able to help him; so we should do in our prayers. We must believe that he may and will help us, as it appeareth by this man, which was made whole straightway; also it appeareth partly by the confession and faith of this man, and partly by the end of the matter, that he was made perfectly whole: so we shall be healed of our diseases, when we come unto him with such a faith as this man did, and especially if we call so earnestly upon him. But, O Lord, what slothfulness is in our hearts! how slender a faith have we! how imperfect and cold is our prayer! So that it is no marvel that it is not heard of God. But we must always consider that God is able to save us, and believe undoubtedly that he will save us: so that when I am sick, as is said before, I may doubt whether God will deliver me from my sickness, or no; but I may not doubt of everlasting life.

Here I might take occasion to entreat of prayer, if the time would serve. But to be short; three things may move us to pray: First, the commandment of God, which biddeth us to call upon him in the day of trouble;* which commandment hath no less authority than this, 'Thou shalt not kill.' The second is the promise of God; for he promiseth us every where in the scripture, that he will hear us when we call upon him; which promise is not to be despised, for he saith, 'Whatsoever you shall desire of my Father in my name, it shall be given unto you.'† Such promises ought to allure us to pray without intermission: Thirdly, the example of all the Prophets the Saints of God that move us thereunto. For

* Ps. l. 15.

† John xiv. 13.

Moses leading the people out of Egypt, after that he came at the Red sea, Pharaoh with his power followed at his back; then Moses, being in such danger, cried unto God, not speaking many words, but lifting up his heart unto God. Then God said unto him, 'Why criest thou?*' Here you see that Moses fighteth only with his prayer against his enemies, so should we fight against our enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, with earnest and fervent prayer. So doth David the King, as it appeareth throughout all the Psalms, how fervent is he in prayer, giving us an example to follow him!

Thus much I thought good to speak of prayer, to move you thereunto; for I fear there are many of you that little regard the same.

But now to return to the text: 'Christ touched him.' Here appeareth the kindness of our Saviour Christ; he is not so proud as the common sort of lords be, that none may speak with them: no, no, he is more friendly; the poor man came to speak with him, and he forthwith came to him and spake with him; wherefore, all lords and men in authority need not be ashamed to learn here of our Saviour Christ, to be gentle and meek of spirit to the poor people.

It is also to be considered, that our Saviour did against the law outwardly; for there was a law that no man should touch a leprous man, yet Christ touched this man. Where you must consider, that civil laws and statutes must be ordered by charity; for this act of Christ was against the words of the law, but not against the law itself. This law was made to that end, that no man should be hurt or defiled by a leper; but Christ touched this man, and was not hurt himself, but cleansed him that was hurt already. And here we may learn rather to follow the mind of the law, than the rigour of the words; and to bring charity with us, which is an interpreter of the law, for else we may miss by extremity.

* Exod. xiv. 15.

We read farther, that he sent him to the priest, and commanded him that he should tell no man. What meant he by this? He would have him not to be his own judge. There was a law that the leprosy should be examined by the priest, and that the priest should give the sentence whether the leper were clean or unclean. Now Christ would not have this man to be his own judge, and to pronounce himself clean, but biddeth him to go to the ordinary. And this he did for two considerations: The first was to convince the Jews with their own wickedness, in that they would not believe in him, but despised and hated him; therefore he sent this man unto them which had been infected with leprosy, so that when they pronounced him clean, they might see their own wickedness and obstinacy, which would not believe. The second cause was, for the observation of the law, and for that he would give none occasion to carnal liberty.

Here our Papists make ado with their auricular confession, proving the same by this place: for they say, Christ sent this man unto the priest to fetch there his absolution; and therefore we must go also unto the priest, and after confession, receive of him absolution of all our sins. But yet we must take heed, say they, that we forget nothing; for all those sins that are forgotten, may not be forgiven. And so they bind the consciences of men, persuading them that when all their sins were all numbered and confessed, it was well. And hereby they took clean away the passion of Christ; for they made this numbering of sins to be a merit, and so they came to all the secrets that were in mens' hearts; so that no Emperor or King could say or do, nor think any thing in his heart, but they knew it; and so applied all the purposes and intents of princes to their own advantage; and this was the fruit of their auricular confession. But to speak of right and true confession, I would to God it were kept in England, for it is a good thing. And those which find themselves grieved in conscience, might go to a learned man, and there fetch of him comfort of the word of God, and so come to a quiet conscience, which is better

ter and more to be regarded than all the riches of the world.

Now to make an end: You have heard in this gospel of divers things which I will not rehearse; but I would have you to keep in remembrance the great faith that this man had in our Saviour, which faith restored him to his health again, and learn by him to believe as he did, that our Saviour will restore unto us the health of soul and body. Also note here, the great love that our Saviour bear unto this man, stedfastly believing that he will be like loving unto thee when thou callest upon him with earnest prayer. For prayer, as I told you, is all together; for prayer with faith goeth through the clouds. But it is a great matter to pray, it is *ars artium*, that is, an art above all arts. Let us therefore give ourselves to prayer and godly living, so that his name may be glorified in us both now and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON

S E R M O N XL.

THE TEMPEST STILLED.

Preached on the fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, 1553.

MATTHEW viii. 23—26.

And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him: and behold there arose a tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith! Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.

HERE in this gospel we have a notable story, and a wonderful miracle which our Saviour did, being with his disciples upon the sea; which story is written for our instruction, that we may comfort ourselves withal, when we are in like trouble in the tempests of this world; for we may learn here many good things, if we consider the story itself, and the circumstances thereof. The Evangelist saith, that our Saviour, accompanied with his disciples, went into a ship, where he laid himself upon a pillow and slept. Now whilst he lay thus asleep, lo, there arose so suddenly a great tempest, that they thought they should all have perished out of hand. The disciples being fore astonished at this horrible weather, wist not what to do. At the last they, remembering themselves, ran to our Saviour which lay there asleep, crying, 'Lord, we perish;' or, as the Evangelist Mark saith, 'Lord, carest thou not

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‘that we perish?’* He being waked, first rebuked them because of their unbelief; after that he rebuked the wind, and commanded the tempest to leave off and cease.

The disciples seeing before the horrible tempest, and now the sudden calmness made through his word, marvelled much, for they never had seen before such things. They had never heard that any man might or had power to rule the sea and the wind before this time, and therefore they were astonished at it; and every one of them said, ‘O what a man is this, which ruleth with his word the sea, and the wind!’

Learn here, by the example of the disciples of Christ, two things: First, not to presume too much; that is to say, not to stand in thine own conceit, thinking thyself to be perfect in faith: Secondly, not to despair because of thy imperfections. The disciples thought themselves perfect and strong in faith, before they came into this tempest; but what doth our Saviour? Perceiving their presumptions, he sendeth them a tempest to bring them to the knowledge of themselves; and then they, feeling the weakness of their faith, run to our Saviour, crying out for help; whereby every man may learn not to think too much of himself: and when he feeleth himself very weak, he may not despair, but run to Christ, like as these disciples did; which, although their heart was weak and feeble, yet were they preserved.

Moreover, we learn here that our Saviour Christ is both very God and very man. His Godhead appeared in that the wind and waters obeyed his word. For what King or Emperor is there in the whole world, that can command the wind or seas? None at all: yea, if the whole world should be set together with all their power and wits, they should not be able to do any such thing; therefore learn here to know the Majesty of Christ, his power, and to believe him to be very God. Secondly, learn here to know his manhood; for the Evangelist saith, ‘He slept;’ which signifieth his very manhood:

* Mark iv. 38.

and that all things were in him that are in us, except sin; and that he can have compassion on us, for that he himself hath been in all miseries and troubles as well as we, as the scripture testifieth unto us. He slept here for weariness, he eateth, he drinketh, he wept, and in him are all these infirmities, and chiefly for two causes: first, to signify unto us his very manhood; secondly, to comfort us with the example, when we are in trouble and miseries, we shall think and know that our Saviour Christ will have compassion over us, for he himself hath tasted of all trouble, and therefore he will be the more inclined to help and assist us with his holy Spirit.

Also we may note here, that the disciples of our Saviour had passed many a time before upon the water, and yet they were never so troubled, nor in such danger. What meaneth this, that they are in trouble now, when our Saviour is with them, and never before when they were not with him; for it was no dangerous water, it was but a little pond, in comparison of the ocean? What meaneth it then that this marvellous tempest so suddenly arose? It signifieth that all those that believe in Christ, and take his part, and study to live after his will and commandment, and forsake the world and all wickedness; all such, I say, must have much trouble and affliction; for it is the will of God, that those which seek to be saved, shall be proved and tried through the fire of tribulation; whereof we have a great number of examples in the scriptures, which plainly teach us, not to seek good cheer by the gospel in this world, but rather misery and adversity. But the most part of gospellers are contrary minded, for they seek good cheer and promotions through the gospel, which is an horrible abuse of God's most holy word.

Moses, that excellent Prophet of God, as long as he was in Pharaoh's house, he was well; he had all things after his mind; but as soon as God called him to be his minister, and to do him service, all things were turned; that is, all sweet things were made sour, all the good cheer was gone; so that he was compelled by necessity to

keep sheep, where before he was a prince, and an heir of the crown of Egypt. Here you see how God doth exercise those which appertain to everlasting life.

Also St. Paul, as long as he was without Christ, was in great authority and estimation among the Jews, inasmuch as he had letters of authority to afflict and put in prison all those which followed Christ; but after that he once came to Christ, what had he? Afflictions and miseries plenty, as it appeareth through all the Acts of the Apostles, and his Epistles.

Now to come to our time: we see daily that they that take part with Christ and his gospel are most commonly nothing regarded in this world: the world and they cannot agree together, for they love godliness, and the others love evil; which two can never be set together. But there are very few, God knows, that take part with Christ; for every man will rather apply himself after the world, and have quietness and a merry life, than to forsake the same, and to have trouble with Christ and his flock; but what reward they shall have, will appear in the end.

A man may marvel how God can suffer his to be so punished and afflicted in this world; and again, the wicked to have ever the upper hand, and to be merry in this world? Because God and the devil are two lords most opposite; for God is good, just, merciful, and liberal, and kind towards his, offering unto them which live after his will, life everlasting: but the devil is most wicked, unmerciful, and cruel, rewarding his servants with everlasting pain and damnation. Now these Lords have their servants: God suffered his to be much afflicted and plagued, for these causes: The first is, though they be justified before God through the passion of our Saviour, yet remaineth a great many sins and imperfections within them. Now to put them in remembrance how abominable a thing sin is in the face of God, he sendeth unto them calamities and miseries, to teach them to beware of sin, and to live upright and holy. Secondly, to teach them to pray and call upon God. And thirdly, to teach us to know ourselves; for when we be in prosperity
and

and wealth we think we have faith, and that all things are safe; but when there cometh affliction, then our imperfection appeareth; therefore God sendeth affliction to verify the saying of St. Peter, 'The judgement of God beginneth at the house of God.'* As for the wicked, for the most part, he letteth them alone until they come to their death-bed, and then they shall find all their wickedness together, and punishment world without end. Thus you see the causes wherefore God suffered his to be in tribulation and affliction.

Now note here, in necessity whither went the disciples? Even to Christ being asleep. We think that he is asleep, if he hear us not so soon as we call upon him; but for all that he sleepeth not: 'He that keepeth Israel, neither slumbereth nor sleepeth:† he is called a helper in due time. But here learn by the example of his disciples, whither thou shalt run in thy distress, namely, to Christ, for he is the right helper, and not unto his saints; for when I call upon any creature, I commit most abominable idolatry. For this is one apparent and great argument to prove Christ to be God, if we call upon him as St. Stephen did, who said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!‡ for invocation declareth an omnipotency: so that when I call upon saints, I make them omnipotent, and so I make them Gods; for omnipotency pertaineth properly and principally only to God. And therefore beware that thou callest upon no creature, but upon God only; for if you do the contrary, you do against God most wickedly.

Here is also to be noted, that some of the true saints of God have but little faith; they have little, but yet they have some; they are not altogether without faith, for they that are altogether without faith are in an evil case; for they are, and remain in the kingdom and dominion of the devil. The disciples had but a little faith, yet they go and awaken Christ, and desire his help. And here note also that he is not angry for awakening of him,

* I. Peter iv. 17.

† Ps. cxxi. 4.

‡ Acts vii. 59.

but he blamed them for their unbelief; which is a very comfortable doctrine for us, that when we feel ourselves weak in faith we shall not despair, but rather run to him, for he will increase our faith. Some think themselves to have very much faith, when they have none at all; and again, some think themselves to have none, when they have some; therefore it is needful for us to pray without intermission, 'Lord, increase my faith; O Lord, help my unbelief!'

Here learn by the example of our Saviour, not to flatter any body when they do naughtily and wickedly; for Christ perceiving his disciples to be unbelievers, flattered them not, but told them plainly, and rebuked them for their faults. Also we may here learn not to be too hasty with our neighbours when they do fall, but to bear with them, like as our Saviour did bear with his disciples. He thrusteth them not away because of their unbelief; so we may not give over our neighbour when he is fallen, for he may rise again.

Now to make an end: Here learn by the example of these disciples to run to Christ when thou art in tribulation; seek help at his hand, and if thou have not a perfect faith, yet despair not, for he is merciful, loving, and kind, unto all that call upon him: to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, both now and ever, world without end. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XLI.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES.

Preached on the fifth Sunday after Epiphany, 1553.

MATTHEW xiii. 24—30.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way, &c.

THIS is a parable or similitude wherein our Saviour compared the kingdom of God, that is, the preaching of his word, wherein consisteth the salvation of mankind, unto a husbandman that soweth good seed in his field.

But before we come unto the matter, you shall first learn to understand what is this word parable, which is a Greek word, and used in the Latin and English tongue: *Parabola est rerum dissimilium comparatio*; that is, 'A parable is a comparison of two things that are unlike outwardly;' but in effect they signify but one thing, for they do appertain to one end; as in this place, Christ compared the word of God unto a sower; which two things are unlike, but yet they teach one thing; for like as the seed is sown in the earth, so is the word of God sown in our hearts; and thus much of this word parable.

The sum of this gospel is, first he speaketh of a husbandman that soweth good seed. After that he maketh mention of an enemy that soweth evil seed: and these

two manner of feeds, that is, the husbandman's feed that was good, and the enemy's feed which was naught, came up both together; so that the enemy was as busy as the other in sowing his evil feed; and while he was busy in sowing it, it was unknown: and at the first springing up it seemeth all to be good feed, but at length the servant of the husbandman perceived the evil feed sown amongst the good, therefore he came and told his master, shewing him all the matter, and required leave to gather the evil feed from among the other. The husbandman himself said, 'Our enemy hath done this; but for all that, let it alone until the harvest, and then will I separate the good from the evil.' This is the sum of this gospel.

First note that he saith, 'When every body was asleep, then he came and sowed his feed.' Who are these sleepers? The bishops and prelates, the slothful and careless curates and ministers; they with their negligence give the devil leave to sow his feed; for they sow not their feed; that is, they preach not the word of God, they instruct not the people with wholesome doctrine, and so they give place to the devil to sow his feed. For when the devil cometh, and findeth the heart of man not defended nor garnished with the word of God, he forthwith possesseth the same, and so getteth victory through the slothfulness of the spirituality, which they shall one day grievously repent. For the whole scripture is full of threatenings of such negligent and slothful pastors, and they shall make an heavy and grievous account one day, when no excuse shall serve, but extreme punishment shall follow, for a reward of their slothfulness.

This gospel giveth occasion to speak of many things; for our Saviour himself expounded this parable unto his disciples after the people were gone from him, and that he was come into the house: for the disciples were not so bold as to ask him of the understanding of this parable in the presence of the people; whereby we may learn good manners, to use in every thing a good and convenient time. Also we may here learn to search and inquire earnestly, and with great diligence, for the true
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understanding of God's word. And when you hear a sermon and are in doubt of something, inquire for it, and be desirous to learn ; for it is written, ' Whosoever hath, unto him shall be given ; and he shall have abundance.*' What meaneth this saying ? When we hear the word of God, and have tasted somewhat thereof, and are afterwards desirous to go forward more and more, then shall we have farther knowledge ; for God will give us his grace to come to farther understanding. And so the saying of our Saviour shall be fulfilled in us.

Now when our Saviour had heard the request of his disciples ; he performeth their desire, and beginneth to expound unto them the parable, saying, ' I am he that soweth good seed ; that is the adversary, the devil, who soweth evil seed.' Here our Saviour, good people, maketh known that he goeth about to do us good, but the devil doth the clean contrary, and he seeketh to spoil and destroy us with his filthy and naughty seed of false doctrine. The field here is the whole world ; the harvest is the end of the world ; the reapers are the angels of God, which are his servants : for like as every lord or master hath his servants to wait upon him, and to do his commandments, so the angels of God wait upon him to do his commandments. The angels at the time of the harvest shall gather all such as have been evil and wicked, and go forward in the same without repentance or amendment of their lives ; all such, I say, shall be gathered together and cast into the fire, ' where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The form of judgement shall be in this wise : Christ our Saviour at the day of judgement, being appointed of God, shall come down with great triumph and honour, accompanied with all his angels and saints that departed in faith out of this world before times ; they shall come with him now, and all the elect shall be gathered to him, and there they shall see the judgement ; but they themselves shall be like judges with him.† After that the

* Matt. xiii. 12.

† I. Cor. vi. 2.

elect are separated from the wicked, he shall give a most horrible and dreadful sentence unto the wicked, commanding his angels to cast them into everlasting fire, where they shall have such torments as no tongue can express.

Therefore our Saviour, desirous to set out the pains of hell unto us, and to make us afraid thereof, calleth it fire, yea, a burning and unquenchable fire. For like as there is no pain so grievous to a man as is fire, so the pains of hell pass all the pains that may be imagined of any man. For you must understand, that there are but two places appointed of Almighty God for all mankind, that is, heaven and hell: and in what state soever a man dieth in the same he shall rise again, for there shall be no alteration or change. Those which die repentant and are sorry for their sins, cry to God for mercy, be ashamed of their own wickedness, and believe with all their hearts that God will be merciful unto them through the passion of our Saviour Christ, those which die in such a faith, shall come into everlasting life and felicity, and shall also rise in the last day in a state of salvation. But when a man dieth without faith in Christ, all the masses in the whole world are not able to relieve him; and so to conclude, all the travails that we have had in time past by seeking of remedy by purgatory, and all the great costs and expences that may be bestowed upon any soul lying in the state of damnation, it can avail nothing, neither can it do any good.

O what a piteous thing is it, that men will not consider this, and leave the sins and pleasures of this world, and live godly; but are so blind and mad, that they will rather have a momentary, and a very short and small pleasure, than hearken to the will and pleasure of Almighty God, that they might avoid everlasting pain and woe, and receive of him everlasting felicity! For that a great many of us are damned, the fault is not in God, for 'God would have all men be saved.'* But the fault

* I. Tim. ii. 4.

is in ourselves, and in our own madness, that had rather have damnation than salvation: therefore, good people, consider these terrible pains in your minds, which are prepared for the wicked and ungodly, avoid all wickedness and sin; set before your eyes the wonderful joy and felicity, and the innumerable treasures which God hath laid up for them that fear and love him, and live after his will and commandments; for no tongue can express, no eye hath seen, no heart can comprehend, nor conceive the great felicity that God hath prepared for his elect and chosen, as St. Paul witnesseth.* Make no delay to repent of your sin, and to amend your life, for you are not so sure to have repentance in the end. It is a common saying, 'Late repentance is seldom sincere.' Therefore consider this thing with yourself betimes, and study to amend your life; for what availeth it to have all the pleasures of the world for a while, and after that to have everlasting pain and infelicity?

Therefore let every one go into his own conscience, and if thou wilt have a trial of thy faith, then do this; examine thyself toward thine enemy; he doth thee harm, he slandereth thee, or taketh away thy living from thee; how shalt thou now behave thyself toward such a man? If thou canst find in thy heart to pray for him, to love him with all thy heart, and forgive him with a good will all that he hath sinned against thee; if thou canst find this readiness in thy heart, then thou art one of those which hath faith, if thou wouldst have him to be saved as well as thyself. And if thou canst do this, thou must argue that thy sin is forgiven thee, and that thou art none of those that shall be cast out, but shall be received and placed among the number of the godly, and shall enjoy with them everlasting life; for our Lord saith, that 'those that are just,' that is, those that are justified by faith, and exercise faith in their living and conversation, they 'shall shine like unto the sun in the kingdom of God;† that is to say, they shall be in exceeding great

* I. Cor. ii. 9.

† Matt. xiii. 43.

honour and glory. For like as the sun exceedeth in brightness all other creatures of God, and is beautiful in the eyes of every man; so shall all the faithful be beautiful, and endued with honour and glory; although in this world they be but outcasts, and accounted as the dross and filth of the world; yet in the other world, when the angels shall gather together the wicked, and cast them into the fire, then shall the elect shine as the sun in the kingdom of God; for no man can express the honour and glory they shall have, which will be content to suffer all things for God's sake, and to reform themselves after his will; or are content to be told of their faults, and glad to amend the same, and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God.

Also the housholder said unto his servants, 'Let them alone until harvest.' Here you may learn that the preachers and the ministers of the word of God have not authority to compel the people with violence to goodness, though they be wicked: but only with the word of God they shall admonish them; not to pull the wicked out by the throat, for that is not their duty.

Now to make an end: If thou dwellest in a town where are some wicked men that will not be reformed, nor in any wise will amend their lives, as there are commonly in every town some; run not thou therefore out of the town, but tarry there still, and exercise thy patience amongst them, exhorting them whensoever occasion serveth to amendment. But for all that, thou must not flatter them in their evil doings and naughty livings, but rebuke their sins and wickedness, and in no wise consent unto them. Then it will be well with thee here in this world, and in the world to come thou shalt have life everlasting; which grant both to you and me, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XLII.
THE PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS.

Preached on Septuagesima Sunday, 1553.

MATTHEW XX. 1—16.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard, &c.

THIS parable is very dark and hard to be understood, and yet there is none other diversity in this scripture than is in any other; for though many scriptures have diverse expositions (as is well to be allowed of, so long as they keep them in the tenor of the faith) yet they pertain all to one end and effect: therefore, although this parable is harder to be understood than others at the first hearing or reading, yet when we shall well advise and consider the same, we shall find it agreeable unto all the others.

Some there are which would have an allegory in it, and apply it to the different ages of man, infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and old age; others to the different ages of the world: but all agree in this point, namely, that it is not requisite in a parable to expound every word of the same; for every parable hath a certain scope, to the which we must have a respect, and not go about to set all words together, or make a gloss for the same: for it is enough for us when we have the meaning of the principal scope, and more needeth not.

Now to the principal cause, and to the which our Saviour hath had a respect in this parable, and that is, he will teach us hereby that all Christian people are equal in all

all things appertaining to the kingdom of Christ. So that we have one Christ, one Redeemer, one baptism, and one gospel, one supper of the Lord, and one kingdom of heaven; so that the poorest man and most miserable that is in the world, may call God his Father, and Christ his Redeemer, as well as the greatest King or Emperor in the world. And this is the scope of this parable, wherein Christ teacheth us this equality; and if this now were considered, the whole parable will be easily and soon understood.

Here is declared unto us that some laboured the whole day, which were hired for a penny, that is of our money, ten pence; for like as we have a piece of money which we call a shilling, and is in value twelve pence, so the Jews had a piece that they called *denarium*, or penny, and that was in value ten of our pence. The first company wrought twelve hours, and the other wrought some nine hours, some six hours, and some three hours, and some but one hour. Now when evening was come, and the time of payment drew on, the householder said to his steward, 'Go, and give every man alike, and begin at those that came last.' And when the other that came early in the morning perceived that they should have no more than those that had wrought but one hour, they murmured against the householder, saying, 'Shall they which have laboured but one hour have as much as we that have wrought the whole day?' The householder, perceiving their malicious mind, said to one of them, 'Friend, wherefore grudgest thou? Is it not lawful for me to do with mine own what pleaseth me? Have I not given thee what I promised thee? Content thyself, therefore, and go thy way, for it hath pleased me to give unto this man which hath wrought but one hour as much as unto thee.' This is the sum of this parable, which he concluded with this sentence, 'The first shall be last, and the last first.'

First, consider who are these murmurers: the merit-mongers, which esteem their own works so much, that they think heaven scarce sufficient to recompense their
good

good deeds ; namely, for putting themselves to pain with saying of our Lady's Psalter, and gadding on pilgrimage, and such like trifles. These are the murmurers, for they think themselves holier than all the world, and therefore worthy to receive a greater reward than all other men : but such men are much deceived, and are in a false opinion ; for man's salvation cannot be gotten by any work, because the scripture saith, ' Life everlasting is the gift of God.'* True it is, that God requireth good works of us, and commandeth us to avoid all wickedness : but for all that we may not do our good works to the end to get heaven withal, but rather to shew ourselves thankful for that which Christ hath done for us, who with his passion hath opened heaven to all believers, that is, to all those that put their hope and trust, not in their deeds, but in his death and passion, and study to live well and godly ; and yet not to make merits of their own works, as though they should have everlasting life for them, as our monks and friars, and all our religious persons were wont to do, and therefore may rightly be called murmurers, for they had so great store of merits, that they sold some of them to other men : and many men spent a great part of their substance to buy their merits, and to be a brother of their houses, or to obtain one of their coats or cowls to be buried in.

But there is a great difference between the judgement of God and the judgement of this world. They in this world were accounted most holy above all men, and so most worthy to be first ; but before God they shall be last, when their hypocrisy and wickedness shall be opened. And thus much I thought to say of murmurers.

But I will not go about to apply all the parts of this parable, for it is enough for us if we know the chief point and scope of the parable, which is, that there shall be an equality in all the things that appertain to Christ ; insomuch, that the rulers of this realm have no better a God, no better sacraments, and no better a gospel, than

* Rom. vi. 23.

the pooreſt in this world ; yea, the pooreſt man hath as good a right to Chriſt and his benefits, as the greateſt man in this world.

This is comfortable to every one, and eſpecially to ſuch as are in miſery, poverty, or other calamities, which if it were well conſidered, we ſhould not be ſo deſirous to get riches, honour, and dignities in this world, as we now are, nor yet ſo malicious one againſt another as we be ; for we would ever make this reckoning with ourſelves, each man in his vocation. The ſervant would think thus with himſelf : I am a ſervant, poor and miſerable, and muſt live after the pleaſure of my maſter, I may not have my free will ; but what then ? I am ſure that I have as good a God as my maſter hath, and I am ſure that my ſervice and buſineſs pleaſeth God as much (when I do it with a good faith) as the preachers and curates, in preaching or ſaying of ſervice : for we muſt underſtand that God eſteemeth not the diverſity of the works, but he hath reſpect unto the faith.

So go through all eſtates ; whoſoever applieth his buſineſs with faith, conſidering that God willeth him ſo to do, ſurely the ſame is moſt beloved of God. If this were well conſidered and printed in our hearts, all ambition and deſire of promotion, all covetouſneſs, and other vices, would depart out of our hearts ; for it is the greateſt comfort that may be unto the poor people, eſpecially ſuch as are nothing regarded in this world, if they conſider that God loveth them as well as the richeſt in the world, it muſt needs be a great comfort unto them.

But there be ſome that ſay, that this ſentence, ‘ the ‘ firſt ſhall be laſt,’ is the very ſubſtance of the parable. And here you ſhall underſtand, that our Saviour Chriſt took occaſion to put forth this parable when there came a young man demanding of him, ſaying, ‘ What ſhall I do ‘ to come to everlaſting life ?’ Our Saviour, after he had taught him the commandments of God, bade him, ‘ Go ‘ and ſell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come ‘ and follow him.’* He hearing this, went away hea-
vily,

* Matt. xix. 16, &c.

vily, for his heart was cold. And then our Saviour spake very terribly against rich men, saying, 'It is more easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into heaven.' A camel is a great cable of a ship, which is more likely than a beast that is called a camel. The disciples hearing this, said, 'Who then can be saved?' He made them answer, saying, 'God is Almighty, and that which is impossible to men, is possible with God;' signifying, that he condemneth not all rich men, but only those which set their hearts upon riches, that care not how they get them, and when they have them, they abuse them to the satisfying of their own carnal appetites and fleshly delights and pleasures, and not to the honour of God.

And again, such riches as are justly, rightly, and godly gotten, those are the good creatures of God, being rightly used to the glory of God and comfort of their neighbours; not hoarding nor heaping them, to make treasures of them: for riches are indifferent, and are not evil of themselves; but they are made evil, when our heart is set upon them, and we hope in them, for that is an abominable thing before the face of God. Now after these words spoken by our Saviour Christ, Peter cometh forth, saying, 'Lo, we have forsaken all that we had, what shall be our reward?' Peter had forsaken all that he had, which was but little in substance, but yet it was a great matter to him, for he had no more but that little; like to the widow which cast into the treasury two mites, yet our Saviour praised her gift above all that gave before her; here thou learnest, that when thou hast but little, yet give of the same little, for it is as acceptable unto God as though it were a greater thing.

So Peter, in forsaking his old boat and net, was allowed as much before God as if he had forsaken all the riches in the world, therefore he shall have a great reward for his old boat; for Christ saith, that he shall be one of them that shall sit and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; and to signify them to be more than others, he giveth them the name of judges, meaning, that they should

condemn the world; like as Almighty God speaketh of the Queen of Sheba, that in the last day she shall arise and condemn the Jews that would not hear Christ, and she came so great a journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Then he answered and said, 'Whosoever leaveth father, or mother, or brethren, for my sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' Now what is this, to leave father and mother? When my father or mother will hinder or let me in any goodness, or would persuade me from the honouring of God and faith in Christ, then I must forsake and rather lose the favour and good-will of my father and mother, than to forsake God and his holy word.

And now Christ addeth and saith, 'The first shall be last, and the last shall be first,' alluding to St. Peter's saying, that soundeth as though Peter looked for a reward for his deeds; and that is it, which is the let of all together, if a man come to the gospel and hearing the same, and after hath a respect to reward, such a man shall be 'the last.' If these sayings were well considered of us, surely we should not have such a number of vain gospellers as we now have, that seek nothing but their own advantage under the name and colour of the gospel. Moreover, he teacheth us to be meek and lowly, and not think much of ourselves, for those that are greatly esteemed in their own eyes, they are the least before God; 'For he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted;'^{*} according to the scripture, which saith, 'God resisteth the proud, and advanceth the humble and meek.'[†] And this is it that he saith, 'the first shall be the last,' teaching us to be careful and not to stand in our own conceit, but ever to mistrust ourselves; as St. Paul teacheth, saying, 'Whosoever standeth, let him take heed he fall not; and therefore we may not put trust in ourselves, but rather in God.'[‡] Farther, in this saying of our Saviour is comprehended a great comfort; for those that are accounted of the world to be most abject, may by this say-

^{*} Luke xiv. 11.

[†] James iv. 6.

[‡] I. Cor. x. 12.

ing have a hope to be made the first and principal ; for although they be never so low, yet they may arise again, and become the highest. And so this is to us a comfortable sentence, which strengtheneth our faith, and keepeth us from desperation and falling from God. And at the end he saith, ' Many are called, and few are chosen.' These words of our Saviour are very hard to understand, and therefore it is not good to be too curious in the n, as some vain fellows are, who seeking carnal liberty, pervert, tofs and turn the word of God after their own mind and purpose : such, I say, when they read these words make their reckoning thus ; saying, What need I to mortify my body with abstaining from all sin and wickedness ; I perceive God hath chosen some, and some are rejected ? Now if I be in the number of the chosen, I cannot be damned ; but if I be accounted among the condemned number, then I cannot be saved ; for God's judgements are immutable. Such foolish and wicked reasons some have ; which bringeth them either to desperation, or else to carnal liberty. Therefore, it is as needful to beware of such reasons, or expositions of the scripture, as it is to beware of the devil himself.

But if thou art desirous to know whether thou art chosen to everlasting life, thou mayst not begin with God ; for God is too high, thou canst not comprehend him ; the judgements of God are unknown to man ; therefore thou mayst not begin there : but begin with Christ, and learn to know Christ, and wherefore he came ; namely, that he came to save sinners, and made himself subject to the law, and a fulfiller of the same, to deliver us from the wrath and danger thereof ; and therefore was crucified for our sins, and rose again to shew and teach us the way to heaven, and by his resurrection to teach us to arise from sin ; so also his resurrection teacheth and admonisheth us of the general resurrection. He sitteth at the right hand of God and maketh intercession for us, and giveth us the Holy Ghost, that comforteth and strengtheneth our faith, and daily assureth us of our salvation.

Consider, I say, Christ and his coming; and then begin to try thyself whether thou art in the book of life or not. If thou findest thyself in Christ, then thou art sure of everlasting life. If thou be without him, then thou art in an evil case: for it is written, 'No man cometh unto the Father but through me.' Therefore if thou knowest Christ, then thou mayst know farther of thy election; but when we are about this matter, and are troubled within ourselves, whether we be elect or no, we must ever have this maxim, or principal rule before our eyes; namely, that God beareth a good-will towards us; God loveth us; God beareth a fatherly heart towards us.

Therefore when thou hast faith in Christ, then art thou sure of thine election. And again, if thou be without Christ and have no faith in him, neither art sorry for thy wickedness, nor have a mind and purpose to leave and forsake sin, but rather exercise and practise the same, then thou shalt go into everlasting fire, if thou die without repentance.

But there are none so wicked, but he may have a remedy; what is that? Enter into thine own heart, and search the secrets of the same; consider thine own life, and how thou hast spent thy days: and if thou find in thyself all manner of uncleanness and abominable sins, and so seeest thy damnation before thine eyes, what shalt thou then do? Confess the same unto thy Lord God; be sorry that thou hast offended so loving a Father, and ask mercy of him in the name of Christ, and believe stedfastly that he will be merciful unto thee in respect of his only Son which suffered death for thee; and then have a good purpose to leave all sin and wickedness, and to withstand and resist the affections of thine own flesh, which ever fight against the spirit, and to live uprightly and godly, after the will and commandment of thy heavenly Father. If thou go thus to work, surely thou shalt be heard; thy sins shall be forgiven thee; God will shew himself true in his promise, for to that end he hath sent his only Son into this world, that he might save sinners.

ners. Consider therefore, I say, wherefore Christ came into this world; consider also the great hatred and wrath that God beareth against sin; and again, consider his great love, shewed unto thee, in that he sent his only Son to suffer the most cruel death, rather than that thou shouldst be damned everlastingly.

Consider therefore this great love of God the Father, amend thy life, fly all occasions of sin and wickedness, and be loth to displease him. And in this doing thou mayst be assured that though thou hadst done all the sins of the world, they shall neither hurt nor condemn thee; for the mercy of God is greater than all the sins of the world. But we sometimes are in such a case, that we think we have no faith at all, or if we have any, it is very feeble and weak: and therefore these are two things; to have faith, and to have the feeling of faith; for some men would fain have the feeling of faith, but they cannot attain unto it; and yet they may not despair, but go forward in calling upon God, and it will come at length; God will open their hearts, and let them feel his goodness.

There are none of us all but we may be saved by Christ, and therefore let us stick hard unto it, and be content to forego all the pleasures and riches of this world for his sake, who for our sake forsook all the heavenly pleasures, and came down into this miserable and wretched world, and here suffered all manner of afflictions for our sake. And therefore it is meet that we should do something for his sake, to shew ourselves thankful unto him; and so we may assuredly be found among the first, and not among the last; that is to say, among the elect of God, who believe in Christ Jesus; to whom, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XLIII.
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Preached on Sexagesima Sunday, 1553.

MARK iv. 3—20.

Behold, there went out a sower to sow, and it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the way side, &c.

THIS parable needeth not to be expounded, for Christ our Saviour himself expounded the same unto his disciples. Therefore let us only consider and learn his exposition: 'He is the sower; the seed is his word; the people which hear the same, are the ground wherein the seed is sown;' Christ our Saviour is the chief preacher and the chief sower: all that preach his word are sowers. And as it now chanced unto Christ, so happened it to all his preachers after him; for they labour, they sow, they till the ground, and they preach much, but it bringeth forth but little fruit: like as here in this gospel it appeareth that there was much ground, for there was hard trodden ground, also thorny ground, and stony ground, and good ground; so that only the fourth part was good ground and bear fruit, notwithstanding that Christ himself preached and sowed the seed.

Here are matters to confound the heretics, that affirm that they only have the true word of God, and the right understanding of the same, because it beareth fruit. As for our preaching, they say, it is naught, for it beareth no fruit; or if it do, it is very little; which opinion is most false and erroneous. For Christ, who was very God and

and very man, confesseth himself that the word of God, though it be most sincerely and purely preached, yet it bringeth little fruit; yea, scarce the fourth part doth prosper and increase. And this is to be noted throughout all the scripture, that ever the greatest number were those that refused the word of God, and the less number were they that received the same, and followed it.

Therefore it appeareth that the devil is not asleep, he resteth not whensoever the word of God is preached; there he is, fearing he shall suffer some wrong, or sustain some loss. What moved our Saviour Christ to use this parable, and to take a similitude of husbandry to teach the people withal? It is requisite in a preacher to apply himself according to his audience; that is to say, when his audience is learned, or when he preacheth before learned men, then it is meet for a preacher to set out his matters learnedly. And again, when he is amongst the ignorant and unlearned people, to use himself so that they may perceive both him and his doctrine; for a good and godly preacher must endeavour himself to do good, and not to set out his learning, whereby to gain the praise of the world, and to be noted a learned man.

Therefore our Saviour kept this rule; he having a respect to his audience, used a common manner of teaching; for at that time, some used to teach the people in apologues, or fables, bringing in how one beast talketh with another; which manner of teaching the heathen much used; and at this time when Christ preached, the Jews manner was to teach commonly by similitudes. Therefore our Saviour, not intending to bring any new manner of teaching in amongst them, did therefore use their common manner of teaching, which was by similitudes. For as the coming of our Saviour Christ into this world was low and humble, so his preaching was simple and plain; and here he used this familiar and plain similitude of husbandry, giving therewith an example to all preachers of his word to beware of vain glory, and only to seek to edify and to profit their audience.

Now

Now the seed is the word of God ; the ground is the people ; like as the husbandman getteth much corn when the ground is well tilled and dunged, so the word of God bringeth forth much fruit, when it lighteth upon a good ground ; that is, upon a heart that gladly receiveth the same. But ' some falleth on the highway,' that is the hard-trodden ground, which are those that are blinded with old customs. And some are stony, and some are thorny, and set their hearts upon worldly riches ; insomuch that all their mind is given to the pleasure and delight of this world, and utterly to forget God, and his holy word.

Which are those that are the highway, or hard-trodden ground ? Those are they that have been brought up in evil customs, and have had evil bringing up, have been swearers, and will abide so ; have been thieves, and will be so still ; have been backbiters, and slanderers, wrathful and revengeful, and so continue, without amendment : and set more by their old customs, than they do by the word of God, and love better their wickedness than good living, and are in mind so to continue still. Wherefore the devil hath them in possession as long as they abide in such hardness of heart, and continue in such wickedness : for the devil fetcheth away the seed, that is, the word of God, that is sown in their hearts ; like as a bird gathereth up the seeds that lie in the highway. And there are many such kind of people, which if they continue in that state, they shall be damned world without end. Yet, they do well when they hear the word of God, for they are much better than those that will neither hear it nor follow it : and what shall they do that be in such a case ? First, let them know themselves, and their own wickedness and sinful life ; let them be sorry for it, and cry to God for mercy, and beware they fall not into farther inconvenience ; for if they go forward in their sinful life, they shall be damned world without end. Therefore, whosoever among you hath the nature of this highway or trodden ground, and is hardened with old customs, let him be mollified with the sweet and pleasant water of the word of God.

Some feed falleth upon the stony ground; that is, such manner of men as at the first are very earnest to hear the word of God, and so continue till some persecution or trouble shall arise for the same, and then they are gone, they will no longer tarry by it: for if one be asked a question of holy water, or holy bread, of mass, or pilgrimages, or of any such trumpery, he yieldeth straightway and granteth it; he will not stand against it, but will follow and go forward with the greater number; but those that are godly do not so, they abide by it; they are content to lose their riches, wife, children, yea, and their lives also, for God's sake and his holy word: but the others that began so hot at the first, are quite gone. And truly, I fear me, that a great many of those are as the seed sown upon stones, which speak now fair, and make a goodly shew of the gospel, but if there come persecution or affliction then they are gone.

But, peradventure, some will say to me, What shall I do, for I cannot abide persecution, I am so weak and so fearful, and my faith is so slender; therefore tell me what I may do, or what remedy I may have? The only remedy is to call upon God to strengthen thy faith, and to endue thee with the Holy Ghost, which is the Comforter, which will strengthen thee in all thy tribulation and affliction. Call, I say, upon Almighty God for his Spirit, and then undoubtedly thou shalt be made able to abide whatsoever tribulation or affliction cometh.

There is another sort of seed that falleth among the thorns and bushes; which signifieth those that are let and hindered by this world, and seek nothing but the world and riches. These men, when they hear that the word of God condemneth their greedy covetousness and heaping of riches, their ambition and desire of worldly honours, they will not hear it, they will not meddle with it, but go forward in their wicked studies. And thus it may appear, that riches are as thorns that choak and kill the good seed that it cannot come up, and bring forth fruit: for like as you see how thorns stop or hinder a man by the way, so that he cannot go speedily, they hang

so upon him, sometimes tear his hose or his coat; so is riches a like hindrance or impediment to us in our going to God; they are burdens that press us downward from God which is above: like as when a man going up a great hill, and hath a heavy bag upon his neck, that man cannot speedily go, neither can he make any great haste; so all they that are laden with the riches and honours of this world, cannot speedily go to God, for they are heavy laden, for their riches draweth them backward.

And here, peradventure, you will say, then it is not lawful for a Christian man to have riches nor to have honours, neither to bear high dignities. But I answer, we are not bound by the commandment of God to cast away our substance and riches that God sendeth us, neither to refuse such honours as we shall be lawfully called unto. But we may not do as many do, that greedily and covetously seek for it day and night; for some there are that have no rest, but still study and muse how they may get riches and honours: we must not do so, neither may seek for it after that sort. But if God call thee to honours, if our vocation requireth us so to do, then follow thy vocation with all humility and gentleness: seek not for it; for it is the greatest madness that may be, to seek for honours or riches. If God sendeth them, refuse them not; as the scripture teacheth us, saying, 'If riches come unto you, set not your hearts upon them, neither put your trust in them.*' So St. Paul commandeth the rich men, saying, 'Ye rich men, be not proud-hearted, nor trust in your uncertain riches.'† Surely St. Paul giveth them a very apt name, for there is nothing so uncertain in this world as riches are, as we see daily by experience; but especially in these our days, where we daily see that men of great riches and honour are, by the mighty hand of God, made humble and of base estate. Therefore let us lift up our hearts unto Almighty God, and trust in him, and leave all ambition and covetousness.

* Ps. lxii. 10.

† I. Tim. vi. 17.

We subjects think in this manner, and, say, O if I were a great man, or a rich man, as some men be, I would do much good, I would relieve the poor, and minister justice to them that have wrong. So the sick man thinketh, If I had my health and might go abroad, I would live after the will of God, and keep me from all sin and wickedness, &c. Such foolish reasoning some have within themselves, not considering, that the best service that any man can do unto God, is to apply to his business in such a state and order as God hath appointed and ordered him: for thou canst do God no better service, being a poor man, than to live uprightly in thine estate. And so the sick man pleaseth God as well in his sickness, if he bear the same patiently and willingly, as another doth in his health. Therefore, these studies to come aloft, and such other vain desires, are naught and foolish; and every good Christian must beware of them, and study to live in his order, as God hath appointed him.

Now to make an end: You have heard here in this gospel, that there are four manner of seeds: the first is sown in the highway, the second upon the stones, the third among thorns, and the fourth in good ground. Now let every man examine his own heart, and let him consider with himself whether he be amongst these or not. If he perceive himself to be like these seeds that fall upon the hard way, let him amend: and if he be like to those that lighted upon stones, let him amend: if he be like the seed fallen among thorns, let him not lie there, but get him out, or else he shall be stopped and choaked up of them, to the danger of his eternal damnation. Also you have heard that the last three manner of seeds have all one property, which is to hear, and to receive. They can be content to hear the word of God, and bear it away with them, but they forget it. But the good seed only hath a property beside that, which is, 'To hear it, and keep it.' To retain is the property of the good seed. Therefore if thou canst find the keeping of God's most holy word in thy heart, then thou art in the good ground, and shall bring forth much fruit; 'Thou shalt

'keep the word of God with patience.'* For God hath ever a church, and those that be of the church will keep his word with patience: for he that suffereth for God's sake, is neither the highway nor trodden ground, neither the thorny nor stony ground, but is the very good ground that bringeth forth much fruit: for if he were a thorny ground, he would not suffer his riches to be taken from him. This patience is not known in wealth, nor in prosperity, but only in adversity and tribulation: for when I am in tribulation or affliction for God's word's sake, when I am persecuted for it, lose my goods and substance, and my wife and children; when I am thus vexed on every side, and suffer all these with patience, without any murmuring or grudging against God, then I am one of those that are sown in the good ground, and shall bring forth much fruit.

But I fear me there are but few of such as can find in their hearts to do so; for every man is given so much unto this world, that they can scarce find in their hearts to give any thing for God's sake unto the poor; how much less would they forego their treasures and their lives, if they should be driven unto it. I fear me, they would rather forsake God and his word, than their goods and lives.

I beseech God Almighty that he will turn our hearts unto him, and give us grace to rise from the evil ground; and that we may be sown in the good ground, and bring forth fruit manifold, to his honour and glory; to whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory for ever. *Amen.*

* Luke viii. 15.

S E R M O N XLIV.

O N T H E C A R D.

*The first of two Sermons of the CARD, preached at
Cambridge, in Advent, 1526.*

J O H N i. 9.

*And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and
Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou?*

TU QUIS ES? Which words are as much as to say in English, ‘Who art thou?’ These be the words of the Pharisees, which were sent by the Jews unto St. John Baptist in the wilderness, to inquire of him who he was; because they marvelled much at his great doctrine, preaching, and baptizing, they were in doubt whether he was Christ or not: wherefore they said unto him, ‘Who art thou?’ Then answered St. John, and confessed that he was not Christ.

Now here is to be noted, the great and prudent answer of St. John Baptist unto the Pharisees, that when they required of him who he was, he would not directly answer of himself what he was, but he said he was not Christ; by the which saying, he thought to put the Jews and Pharisees out of their false opinion and belief towards him, in that they would have had him to exercise the office of Christ, and so declared farther unto them of Christ, saying, ‘There standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoes latchet I am not worthy
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‘to unloose.’ By this you may perceive that St. John spake much in the praise of Christ his master, professing himself to be in no wise like unto him. So likewise it shall be necessary unto all men, not to ascribe unto themselves any goodnes of themselves, but all unto our Lord God, as shall appear hereafter, when this question afore-said, ‘Who art thou?’ shall be moved unto them.

Now then, let every man and woman, of a good and simple mind, contrary to the Pharisees intent, ask this question, ‘Who art thou?’ This question must be moved to themselves, what they be of themselves, on this fashion, What art thou of thyself only as thou camest into this world? What art thou of thyself? Which question, if thou rehearse oftentimes unto thyself, thou shalt well perceive and understand, how thou shalt make answer unto it; which must be made on this wise, I am of myself, and by myself, coming from my natural father and mother, the child of the ire and indignation of God, and the true inheritor of hell, a lump of sin, and working nothing of myself, but all towards hell, except I have better help of another than I have of myself: which state that we be born unto, is come unto us for our own deserts, as this example following proveth:

Let it be supposed that it might please the King’s Grace to accept into his favour a mean man, of simple degree and birth, not born to any possession; whom the King favoureth, not because this person hath of himself deserved any such favours, but of his own mere motion and fancy; and because the King’s Grace will more declare his favour unto him, he giveth unto this said man a thousand pounds in lands, to him and his heirs, on this condition, that he shall take upon him to be the chief captain and defender of his town of Calais, and to be true and faithful to him in the custody of the same, against the Frenchmen especially, above all other enemies.

This man taketh on him this charge, promising his fidelity thereunto. It chanceth in process of time, that by the frequent familiarity of this captain with the Frenchmen, they give unto the said captain a great sum
of

money, so that he will be content and agreeable that they may enter into the said town of Calais by force of arms, and so thereby possess the same unto the crown of France: upon this agreement the Frenchmen do invade the said town of Calais, through the negligence of this captain.

Now the King's Grace hearing of this invasion, cometh with a great army to defend this his said town, and so by good policy of war overcometh the said Frenchmen, and entereth again into his town of Calais. Then he being desirous to know how these enemies of his came thither, he maketh inquiry by who this treason was conspired; by this search it is found out that his own captain was the author and beginner of the betraying of it. The King, seeing the great infidelity of this person, dischargeth this man of his office, and taketh from him and his heirs this thousand pounds possessions. Think you not that the King doth use justice unto him, and all his posterity and heirs? Yes, truly: the said captain cannot deny himself but that he had true justice, considering how unfaithfully he behaved himself to his prince, contrary to his own fidelity and promise: so likewise it was of our first father Adam; he had given unto him the spirit of knowledge, to work all goodness therewith; this said spirit was not given alone unto him, but unto all his heirs and posterity: he had also delivered him the town of Calais, that is to say, Paradise in earth, the most strong and fairest town in the world, to be in his custody; he nevertheless by the instigation of these Frenchmen, that is to say, the temptation of the fiend, did obey unto their desire, and so he brake his promise and fidelity, the commandment of the everlasting King his master, in eating of the fruit by him inhibited.

Now then, the King seeing this great treason in his captain, deposed him of the thousand pounds of possessions, that is to say, of everlasting life in glory, and all his heirs and posterity: for likewise as he had the spirit of knowledge, for him and his heirs, so in like manner when he lost the same, his heirs lost it also by him, and in him. So now, this example proveth, that by our father Adam
we

we had once in him the very inheritance of everlasting joy; and by him, and in him again we lost the same.

The heirs of the captain of Calais could not by any manner of claim ask of the King the right and title of their father in the thousand pounds possessions, by reason he deserved to lose them, and greater, committing so high treason. In the same manner it may be answered, that if our father Adam had true justice to be excluded from his possession of everlasting glory in paradise, let us not think the contrary that be his heirs, but that we have no wrong in losing also the same; yea, we have true justice and right. Then in what miserable state be we, that of the right and just title of our own deserts have lost the everlasting joy, and claim of ourselves to be true inheritors of hell: which is the answer to this question, made to every man and woman by themselves, 'Who art thou?'

And now, the world standing in this damnable state, cometh in the incarnation of Christ; the Father in heaven perceiving the frail nature of man, that he by himself, and of himself, could do nothing for himself, by his prudent wisdom sent down the second person in the Trinity, his son Jesus Christ, to declare unto man his pleasure and commandment: and so at the Father's will Christ took on him human nature, being willing to deliver man out of this miserable way, and was content to suffer cruel passion in shedding his blood for mankind, and so left behind for our safeguard, laws, and ordinances, to keep us always in the right path unto everlasting life, which if we do keep and observe, according to our profession, we shall answer better to this question, 'Who art thou?'

The answer of this question is, when I ask it unto myself, I must say that I am a Christian man, a Christian woman, a child of everlasting joy, through the merits of the bitter passion of Christ. This is a joyful answer. Here we may see how much we be bound and indebted unto God, that hath revived us from death to life, and saved us that were damned; which great benefit we can-

not well confider, unleſs we do remember what we were of ourſelves before we meddled with him or his lays: and the more we know our feeble nature, and ſet leſs by it, the more we ſhall conceive and know in our hearts what God hath done for us; and the more that we know what God hath done for us, the leſs we ſhall ſet by ourſelves, and the more we ſhall love and pleaſe God; ſo that in no condition we ſhall either know ourſelves or God, except we do utterly confeſs ourſelves to be mere vilenefs and corruption. Well, now it is come to this point, that we be Chriſtian men, Chriſtian women; I pray you what doth Chriſt require of a Chriſtian man, or of a Chriſtian woman? Chriſt requireth nothing elſe of a Chriſtian man or woman, but that he will obſerve his rule: for like as he is a good Auguſtine Friar that keepeth well St. Auguſtine's rule, ſo he is a good Chriſtian man that keepeth well Chriſt's rule.

Now then, what is Chriſt's rule? Chriſt's rule conſiſteth in many things, as in the commandments, and the works of mercy, and ſo forth. And becauſe I cannot declare Chriſt's rule unto you at one time, as it ought to be done, I will apply myſelf according to your cuſtom at this time of Chriſtmas, I will, as I ſaid, declare unto you Chriſt's rule, but that ſhall be in Chriſt's cards: and whereas you are wont to celebrate Chriſtmas in playing at cards, I intend, with God's grace, to deal unto you Chriſt's cards, wherein you ſhall perceive Chriſt's rule. The game that we will play at ſhall be the Triumph, which if it be well played at, he that dealeth ſhall win; the players ſhall likewiſe win, and the ſtanders and lookers upon ſhall do the ſame; inſomuch that there is no man that is willing to play at this Triumph with theſe cards, but they ſhall be all winners, and no loſers.

Let therefore every Chriſtian man and woman play at theſe cards; that they may have and obtain the Triumph; you muſt mark alſo that the Triumph muſt apply to fetch home unto him all the other cards, whatſoever ſuit they be of. Now then take ye this firſt card, which muſt appear and be ſhewed unto you as followeth. You have

heard what was spoken to men of the old law, 'Thou shalt not kill; whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of judgement; and whosoever shall say unto his neighbour, Racha, (that is to say, brainless, or any other like word of rebuking) shall be in danger of a council; and whosoever shall say unto his neighbour, Fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.'* This card was made and spoken by our Saviour Christ himself.

Now it must be noted, that whosoever shall play with this card, must first, before they play with it, know the strength and virtue of the same. Now behold and see, this card is divided into four parts; the first part is one of the commandments that were given unto Moses in the old law, before the coming of Christ, which commandment we also be bound to observe and keep, and it is one of our commandments. The other three parts spoken by Christ, be nothing else but expositions unto the first part of this commandment; for in very effect all these four parts be but one commandment, that is to say, 'Thou shalt not kill;' yet, nevertheless, the three last parts do shew unto thee how many ways thou mayest kill thy neighbour contrary to this commandment; yet for all Christ's exposition, in the three last parts of this card the terms be not open enough to thee that now dost read and hear them spoken. No doubt the Jews understood well enough when he spake unto them the three last sentences: wherefore seeing that these terms were natural terms of the Jews, it shall be necessary to expound them, that we in like manner may understand Christ as well as the Jews did. We will begin with the first part of this card; you must therefore understand that the Jews and the Pharisees of the old law, to whom this first part, this commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' was spoken; thought it sufficient and enough for their discharge not to kill with any manner of material weapon, as sword, dagger, or with any such weapon; and they thought it no great fault whatsoever they said or did by their neighbour,

* Matt v. 21, 23.

so that they did not harm, or meddle with their corporal bodies, which was a false opinion in them, as prove well the three other sentences following the first part of this card.

Now as touching these sentences, you must note or take heed what difference there is between these three manner of offences: To be angry with your neighbour; to call your neighbour brainless, or any such word of disdain; or to call your neighbour fool. Whether these three manner of offences be of themselves more grievous one than the other, it is to be opened unto you. A man which conceiveth against his neighbour or brother, ire, or wrath in his mind, by some manner of occasion given unto him, although he be angry in his mind against his said neighbour, he will, peradventure, express his ire by no manner of sign, either in word or deed; yet nevertheless he offendeth against God, and breaketh this commandment, and is in danger of judgement.

Now to the second of these three: That man that is moved with ire against his neighbour, and in his ire calleth his neighbour brainless, or some other like word of displeasure, as a man may say in a fury, 'I shall handle thee well enough,' which words and countenances do more represent and declare ire to be in this man, than in him that was but angry, and spake no manner of word, nor shewed any countenance to declare his ire; wherefore, as he that so declareth his ire either by word or countenance, offendeth more against God, so he both killeth his own soul, and doth what in him is to kill his neighbour's soul in moving him unto ire, wherein he is faulty himself, and so this man is in danger of a council.

Now to the third offence, and last of these three: That man that calleth his neighbour fool, doth more declare his angry mind toward him, than he that calleth his neighbour but brainless, or any such word moving ire: wherefore he doth most offend, because he doth most earnestly with such words express his ire, and so he is in danger of hell-fire. Wherefore you may understand now these three parts of this card to be three offences, and that

one is more grievous to God than the other, and that one killeth more the soul of man than the other.

Now, peradventure, there be some that will marvel that Christ did not declare this commandment by some greater faults of ire, than by these which seem but small faults, as to be angry and speak nothing of it, to declare it and to call a man brainless, and to call his neighbour fool; truly these be the smallest, and the least faults that belongeth to ire, or to killing in ire: therefore beware how you offend in any kind of ire, seeing that the smallest be damnable to offend in, see that you offend not in the greatest. For these offences must needs have punishment in hell, as appeareth by these three terms; judgement, council, and hell-fire: these three terms do signify nothing else but three divers punishments in hell, according to the offences: judgement is less in degree than council, therefore it signifieth a lesser pain in hell; and it is ordained for him that is angry in his mind with his neighbour, but doth express his malice neither by word, nor countenance; council is a less degree in hell, than hell-fire, and is a greater degree in hell than judgement; and is ordained for him that calleth his neighbour brainless, or any such word, that declareth his ire and malice; wherefore it is more pain than judgement. Hell-fire is more pain in hell than council or judgement, and it is ordained for him that calleth his neighbour fool; he declareth more his malice, in that it is an earnest word of ire; wherefore hell-fire is appointed for it, that is, the most pain of three punishments.

Now you have heard that to these divers offences of ire and killing be appointed punishments according to their degrees; for look, as the offence is, so shall the pain be: if the offence be great, the punishment shall be accordingly; if it be less, there shall be less pain for it. I would not now that you should think because that here are but three degrees of punishment spoken of, that there be no more in hell; no doubt Christ spake of no more but of these three degrees of punishments, thinking they were sufficient enough for example, whereby we might

might understand, that there be as divers and many pains as there be offences: and so by these three offences and these three punishments, all other offences and punishments may be compared with each other.

These evil-disposed affections and sensualities in us are always contrary to the rule of our salvation. What shall we do now or imagine to thrust down these Turks,* and to subdue them? It is a great ignominy and shame for a Christian man to be bound and subject unto a Turk; nay, it shall not be so, we will first cast a trump in their way, and play with them at cards who shall have the better; let us play therefore on this fashion with this card. Whensoever it shall happen these foul passions and Turks do rise in our stomachs against our brother or neighbour, either for unkind words, injuries, or wrongs, which they have done unto us, contrary unto our mind, straightways let us call unto our remembrance, and speak this question unto ourselves, 'Who art thou?' The answer is, I am

Christian man. Then farther we must say to ourselves, What requireth Christ of a Christian man? Now turn up your trump, your heart (hearts is trump, as I said before) and cast your trump, your heart, on this card, and upon this card you shall learn what Christ requireth of a Christian man; not to be angry, nor moved to ire against his neighbour, in mind, countenance, nor otherways, by word or deed. Then take up this card with your heart, and lay them together; that done, you have won the game of the Turk, whereby you have defaced and overcome by true and lawful play.

But considering that we be so prone and ready to continue in sin, let us cast down ourselves with Mary Magdalen, and the more we bow down with her towards Christ's feet, the more we shall be afraid to rise again in sin, and the more we know and submit ourselves, the more we shall be forgiven, as appeareth by her example.

I doubt not but we be all Magdalens in falling into sin, and in offending; but we be not again Magdalens in

* *i. e.* Our evil and rebellious passions.

knowing ourselves, and in rising from sin. If we be true Magdalens, we should be as willing to forsake our sin, and rise from it, as we were willing to commit sin, and to continue in it, and we then should know ourselves best, and make more perfect answer than ever we did unto this question, 'Who art thou?' To the which we might answer, that we be true Christian men and women: and then, I say, you should understand and know how you ought to play at this card, 'Thou shalt not kill,' without any interruption of your deadly enemies the Turks, and so triumph at the last, by winning everlasting life in glory. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XLV.

ON THE CARD.

*The second sermon of the Card preached at Cambridge,
in Advent, 1556.*

JOHN i. 19.

*And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and
Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou ?*

NOW you have heard what is meant by this first card, and how you ought to play with it, I purpose again to deal unto you another card, almost of the same suit ; for they be of so nigh affinity, that one cannot be well played without the other. The first card declared, ‘ That you ‘ should not kill,’ which might be divers ways, as being angry with your neighbour, in mind, in countenance, in word, or deed ; it declared also how you should subdue the passions of ire, and so clear evermore yourselves from them ; and where this card doth kill in you these stubborn Turks ; this second card will shew, not only that they should be mortified in you, but that you yourselves shall cause them to be likewise mortified in your neighbour, if that your said neighbour hath been through your occasion moved unto ire, either in countenance, word, or deed : now therefore let us hear the tenor of this card.

‘ Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and ‘ there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against ‘ thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy ‘ way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come ‘ and offer thy gift.’*

* Matt. v. 23, 24.

This card was spoken by Christ against all such as do presume to come unto the church to make oblation unto God either by prayer, or any other deed of charity, not having their neighbours reconciled. Reconciling is as much as to say, as to restore thy neighbour unto charity, which by thy words or deeds is moved against thee; then if so be if that thou hast spoken to, or of thy neighbour, whereby he is moved to ire or wrath, thou must lay down thy oblation. Oblations be prayers, alms deeds, or any work of charity; these be called oblations to God; lay down therefore thine oblation, begin to do none of these foresaid works before thou goest unto thy neighbour, and confess thy fault unto him; declaring thy mind, that if thou hast offended him, thou art willing to make him amends, as far forth as thy words and substance will extend, requiring him not to take it at the worst; thou art sorry in thy mind, that thou shouldest be the occasion of his offending. What manner of card is this? will some say. Why; What have I to do with my neighbour's or brother's malice? as Cain said, 'Have I the keeping of my brother,' or shall I answer for him and for his faults.† This were no reason; as for myself, I thank God I owe no man malice nor displeasure, if others owe me any, at their own peril be it: let every man answer for himself. Nay, Sir, not so, as you may understand by this card; for it saith, If thy neighbour hath any thing, any malice against thee, through thine occasion, lay even down, saith Christ, thine oblation; pray not to me, do no good deeds for me, but go first unto thy neighbour, and bring him again unto my flock, which hath forsaken the same through thy naughty words, mocks, or disdainful countenance, and so forth; and then come and offer thine oblation, then do thy devotion, then do thy alms deeds, then pray, if thou wilt have me hear thee. O good Lord! this is a hard reckoning, that I must go and seek him out that is offended with me, before I pray or do any good deed. I cannot go unto him: peradventure he

* Gen. iv. 9.

is an hundred miles from me, beyond the seas, or else I cannot tell where; if he were here nigh, I would with all my heart go unto him. This is a lawful excuse before God on this fashion, that thou wouldest in thine heart be glad to reconcile thy neighbour, if he were present, and that thou thinkest in thy heart, whensoever thou shalt meet with him, to go unto him, and require him charitably to forgive thee, and so never intend to come from him, until the time that you both depart one from the other true brethren in Christ. Yet peradventure there be some in the world that be so devilish and hard-hearted, that they will not apply on any condition unto charity: for all that, do what lieth in thee by all charitable means to bring him to unity; if he will in no wise come thereunto, thou mayest be sorrowful in thy heart, that by thine occasion that man or woman continueth in such a damnable state; this notwithstanding, if thou do the best that lieth in thee to reconcile him, thou art discharged towards God. What aileth us to be so bold, or count it but a small fault or none, to bring another man out of patience for every trifle that standeth not with our mind? That you shall hear what Christ saith unto such persons; saith Christ, I came down into this world, and so took on me bitter passion for man's sake, by the merits whereof I intended to make unity and peace in mankind, to make man brother unto me, and so to expel the dominion of Satan the devil, which worketh nothing else but dissention; and yet now there be a great number of you that have professed my name, and say you be Christian men, which do rebel against my purpose and mind: I go about to make my fold; you go about to break the same, and kill my flock: How darest thou, saith Christ, presume to come unto my altar, unto my church, or unto my presence, to make oblation unto me, that takest on thee to spoil my lambs? I go about like a good shepherd to gather them together; and thou doest the contrary, evermore ready to divide and lose them which I bought so dearly with my precious blood? I warn thee out of my sight, come not in my

presence, I refuse thee and all thy works, except thou go and bring home again my lambs which thou hast lost: wherefore, if thou thyself intend to be one of mine, lay even down now thine oblation, and come no farther toward mine altar; but go and seek them without any questions, as it becometh a true and faithful servant. What! some will say, I am sure he loveth me well enough; he speaketh fair to my face, yet for all that thou mayest be deceived; it proved not true love in a man to speak fair: if he love thee with his mind and heart, he loveth thee with his eyes, with his tongue, with his feet, with his hands and his body; for all these parts of a man's body be obedient to his will and mind: he loveth thee with his eyes that looketh cheerfully on thee, when thou meetest with him, and is glad to see thee prosper and do well: he loveth thee with his tongue, that speaketh well of thee behind thy back, or giveth thee good counsel: he loveth thee with his feet, that is willing to go and help thee out of trouble and business: he loveth thee with his hands, that will help thee in time of necessity, by giving some alms deeds, or with any other occupation of the hand: he loveth thee with his body, that will labour with his body, or put his body in danger to do good for thee, or to deliver thee from adversity, and so forth, with the other members of his body: and if thy neighbour will do according to these sayings, then thou mayest think that he loveth thee well, and thou in likewise oughtest to declare and open thy love unto thy neighbour in like fashion, or else you be bound one to reconcile the other, till this perfect love be ingendered amongst you. It may fortune, you will say, I am content to do for my neighbour what I can, saving myself harmless: I promise thee Christ will not hear this excuse; for he himself suffered harm for our sakes, and for our salvation was put to extreme death. Wherefore we must needs suffer pain with Christ to do our neighbour good, as well with the body and all its members, as with heart and mind.

Now I trust you know what your card meaneth, let
us,

us see how we can play with the same. Whensoever it shall happen that you go and make your oblation unto God, ask of yourselves this question, 'Who art thou?' The answer as you know is, 'I am a Christian man.' Then you must again ask yourself, what requireth Christ of a Christian man? Now then cast down your trump, your heart, and look first at one card, then at another. The first card telleth thee thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not be angry, thou shalt not be out of patience. This done, thou shalt look if there be any more cards to take up, and if thou look well, thou shalt see another card of the same suit, wherein thou shalt know that thou art bound to reconcile thy neighbour. Then cast thy trump unto them both, and gather them all three together, and do according to the virtue of thy cards, and surely thou shalt not lose. Thou shalt first kill the great Turks, and discomfit and thrust them down. Thou shalt again fetch home Christ's sheep that thou hast lost, whereby thou mayest go both patiently, and with a quiet mind unto the church, and make thy oblation unto God, and then without doubt he will hear thee: but yet Christ will not accept our oblation, (although we be in patience, and have reconciled our neighbour) if that our oblation be made of another man's substance, but it must be our own. See therefore that thou hast gotten thy goods according to the laws of God and of thy Prince; for if thou gettest thy goods by extortion, or by any other unlawful ways, then if thou offer a thousand pounds for it, it will stand thee in no good effect, for it is not thine. In this point a great number do offend, for when they be made rich by other men's goods, then they will take upon them to build churches, to give ornaments to God and his altar, to guild saints, and to do many good works therewith; but it shall be all in their own name, and for their own glory. Wherefore, saith Christ, 'They have in this world their reward;*' and so their oblations be not their own, nor be they acceptable before God. Another

* Matt. vi. 2.

way God will refuse thy voluntary oblation, as thus ; If so be it, that thou hast gotten never so truly thy goods, according to both the laws of God and man, and hast with the same goods not relieved thy poor neighbour, when thou hast seen him hungry, thirsty, and naked, he will not take thy oblation when thou shalt offer the same, because he will say unto thee, ' When I was hungry, ' thou gavest me no meat ; when I was thirsty, thou ' gavest me no drink ; and when I was naked, thou didst ' not cloath me : '* wherefore I will not take thy oblation, because it is none of thine. I left it thee to relieve thy poor neighbours, and thou hast not therein done according unto this my commandment, ' I will have ' mercy, rather than sacrifice.' Wherefore until thou dost the one as well as the other, I will not accept thine oblation. Evermore bestow the greatest part of thy goods in works of mercy, and the less part in voluntary works. Voluntary works be called all manner of offering in the church, except your offering days, and your tithes ; setting up candles, gilding and painting, building of churches, giving of ornaments, and such others, be called voluntary works, which works of themselves may be good, and convenient to be done. Necessary works, and works of mercy, are called commandments ; and works of mercy consist in relieving and visiting thy poor neighbours. Now then, if men be so foolish of themselves, that they will bestow the most part of their goods in voluntary works, which they are not bound to keep, but willingly and by their devotion, and leave the necessary works undone, which they be bound to do, they with all their voluntary works are like to go unto everlasting damnation. And I promise you, if you build an hundred churches, give as much as you can make to the gilding of saints, and honouring of the church, and if thou go as many pilgrimages as thy body can well suffer, and offer candles great as oaks, if thou leave the works of mercy and the commandments undone, these works shall nothing avail

* Matt. xxv. 42.

thee. If you will build a glorious church unto God, see first yourselves to be in charity with all your neighbours, and suffer not them to be offended by your works. Then when you come into your parish church, you bring with you the temple of God; as St. Paul saith, 'You yourselves be the very temples of God:† Again, if you list to gild and paint Christ in your churches, and honour him in vestments, rather see that before your eyes the poor people die not for lack of meat, drink and cloathing. Then do you deck the true temple of God, and honour him: then, I say, build your material churches, do all your voluntary works, and they will then represent unto God, and testify with you, that you have provided him a glorious place in your hearts. But beware, I say again, that you do not run so far into your voluntary works, that you do quite forget your necessary works of mercy, which you are bound to keep; you must have ever a good respect unto the best and worthiest works toward God, to be done first and with more efficacy, and the other to be done secondarily. Thus if you do, with the other that I have spoken of before, you may come according to the tenor of your cards, and offer your oblations and prayers to our Lord Jesus Christ, who will both hear and accept them to your everlasting joy and glory, to the which may He bring us, and all those whom he suffered death for. *Amen.*

† I. Cor. vi. 19.

F I N I S.

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F I N I S.

The Reader is desired to correct the following Errata.

VOL. I.

- Page 21, line 13, for 'Bishop of *Winchester*,' read 'Bishop of *Worcester*.'
- Page 155, the two first references in the margin should be transposed.

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